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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 7 March 2019

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 7 mars 2019

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Let us pray.
Prayers/Prières.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THE PEOPLE'S HEALTH CARE
ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LES SOINS DE SANTÉ
POUR LA POPULATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 6, 2019, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 74, An Act concerning the provision of health care, continuing Ontario Health and making consequential and related amendments and repeals / *Projet de loi 74, Loi concernant la prestation de soins de santé, la prorogation de Santé Ontario, l'ajout de modifications corrélatives et connexes et des abrogations.*

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand when this bill was last debated the member for Ottawa South had the floor, and I recognize, again, the member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to do my final nine minutes on this bill.

Son français est bon. Ce matin, je parle à propos des services en français pour les soins de santé. Ce projet de loi est un pas en arrière pour les Franco-Ontariens. Il élimine les réseaux locaux et les remplace par un seul comité pour consultation. Le projet de loi ne tient pas compte des progrès réalisés dans la prestation des services en français dans le domaine de la santé en Ontario. Les travaux ont permis de répondre efficacement aux besoins spécifiques des régions. La communauté franco-ontarienne fait partie intégrante de la planification locale des services en français. Éliminer les réseaux et créer un comité de consultation revient à remonter 20 ans en arrière. Ce changement est très préoccupant pour la communauté franco-ontarienne. C'est une autre gifle qui fait suite à l'élimination du commissaire aux services en français et à l'annulation de l'université franco-ontarienne.

French-language services are guaranteed under the law here in Ontario. I think, when you look at this bill, creating a committee of consultation is going back 20 years. The gains that the Franco-Ontarian community have made in the planning of the services that they are entitled to have depended on governments working with them locally. The Franco-Ontarian community is not one big homogenous blob across Ontario. They live in different places. They

have different needs. They have different capacities, and there was much work still to be done to improve that local planning. To remove that is of serious concern to the community, and of serious concern to me.

Equally, with our Indigenous partners, again creating a committee of consultation—it's not the right way to go. What they really need is a seat at the table and a commitment to have a seat at that table.

I don't agree with the creation of the super-board; I don't think it's the right thing to do. But in the event that it gets created, there needs to be a seat at that table. There must be a seat at that table. That's our obligation.

I want to go back to earlier in the debate and I want to remind all the members that we've been saying the same things. I've heard the minister's speech and many of the remarks from members opposite, and we've all been saying the same thing for at least 30 years. Maybe all the words aren't the same, but we've been saying the same things.

So the challenge is not our intent; it's the execution. The mass centralization and huge change, first of all, are not going to do anything to fix hallway medicine today. This bill is not going to change anything next year or the year after that or the year after that. The challenge right now is that there's an immediate problem with that. We need to do something. That's why we opened up a hospital here in Toronto—basically, a 150-bed hospital last year—and why we did 1,100 surge beds. This government has continued it and it's the right thing to do, but we need to do more right now, and this is taking away from that effort to get that done.

This bill will not improve access to palliative care for people to be able to die at home this year, next year or the year after that.

So I think when we debate this bill, we have to realize that we have immediate problems that exist right now, that we have to address right now. The way that we're going to know that this government is serious about doing it is by their budget. We'll see it in the budget. I know we had a report from the FAO, who essentially said, "Just to keep pace, you've got to spend another \$12 billion over the next four years"—just to keep pace.

All partisanship aside, we've all had experiences at home and in our lives with health care, with family members and with ourselves. We know how much we depend on it. We know that we expect it to be there when we need it, and that's our obligation. No matter who we are, no matter what side we sit on, no matter what our background is, that's our obligation. That's, I think, a trust that the Ontario people give to us.

It's not just about planning for the future; it's about the right now. You have to sometimes take actions right now. That's why governments did surge beds.

I want to remind the members that this year's budget is going to show what the road map really is. I encourage the government to fulfill its commitment for the 15,000 beds. It's going to be hard. It's going to be about \$3 billion a year, every year, for those beds—\$3 billion a year, every year, for 15,000 long-term-care beds. This stuff is not easy.

I want to finish by saying that when you take a big, complex system where tens of thousands of people treat millions of people in thousands of places, and you try to turn it really quickly, what happens is, things fall between the cracks, things like the immediate things I'm talking about right now: hallway medicine, access to palliative care, access to a primary care practitioner. Some 94% of Ontarians have a practitioner, but they can't get them when and for what they need them for. So I caution the government, as it moves to this centralization, about what that's going to mean, what that's going to mean 10 or 15 years from now. I talked about the right now.

0910

We know that inside the bill there are powers that are given to the minister and the board that say that you can amalgamate, close, essentially take over a community organization—30 days, no appeal, no notice. I said to the member opposite yesterday, “Who owns the Brockville hospital? Who owns the hospital in Sudbury? Who owns the hospice in Simcoe?” The communities. They don't have a seat at the table.

I know that your intent is right and good. I'm not questioning that. I believe that. What we need to know is, and what we need to understand is, we're not here forever. We hold these seats for a short time, and somebody is going to come after us. The power that we give to those people and that we give to people who are unelected is a very serious thing, because we're not going to be there.

So when you look at this bill, and you think about the powers that are being put in there, think about the limits that should be put on those powers, the rights communities have to appeal, and I wish I had—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you. Questions and comments.

M^{me} Natalia Kusendova: Je remercie mon collègue le député d'Ottawa-Centre.

L'état de délabrement dans lequel notre système de santé se trouve est une crise en gestation au cours des 15 dernières années de mauvaise gouvernance par le gouvernement libéral. Chaque jour, aujourd'hui, on a 1 000 patients qui attendent les soins dans les couloirs. Madame la Présidente, croyez-vous qu'en 2003, le temps d'attente moyen pour obtenir un lit de soins de longue durée était de 36 jours? Aujourd'hui, l'attente moyenne pour obtenir un lit pour les soins de longue durée a augmenté jusqu'à 146 jours. Ça, c'est ce que le gouvernement libéral a fait à nos soins de longue durée en Ontario. Ils n'ont pas investi dans un seul lit pendant 15 ans.

L'Ontario est fier de ses soins de santé. Cela représente notre plus grosse dépense en dollars de taxes. En fait,

l'Ontario devrait dépenser 61,3 milliards de dollars pour l'an 2018 jusqu'à 2019. Pourtant, bien que le secteur de la santé soit la dépense la plus importante du budget de l'Ontario, nos hôpitaux et nos services de santé ne reflètent pas les investissements que les contribuables ont réalisés. Il est temps de cesser d'investir dans la bureaucratie des soins de santé que le gouvernement précédent a créée et de commencer à investir dans les patients et dans les professionnels de première ligne. Comme infirmière qui travaille dans des hôpitaux, je suis fière de faire partie de ce gouvernement qui va mettre le patient au centre des soins de santé, et pas les bureaucrates.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Nous sommes ici aujourd'hui parce que le gouvernement a déposé un projet de loi pour complètement changer notre système de santé. La raison pour faire ça c'est que nos hôpitaux sont pleins à craquer : 50 % des hôpitaux en Ontario ont plus de patients qu'ils n'ont de lits.

À Horizon Santé-Nord à Sudbury, on parle de 40 à 80 personnes suffisamment malades pour être admises à l'hôpital qui n'auront pas de lit d'hôpital. On parle de gens comme Léo Séguin, qui a passé 10 jours dans une salle de bain. On parle de Danny, qui lui est mort à l'urgence, qui pouvait à peine avoir suffisamment d'espace pour que quelqu'un puisse lui tenir la main dans ses dernières heures.

Est-ce que ça, ça a besoin d'être réparé? Oui, et vite. Mais le projet de loi qu'on a devant nous n'a rien à faire avec les problèmes auxquels on fait face dans notre système de santé. Un des points qui me tient à coeur comme franco-ontarienne, c'est que nous avons les entités de planification des services de santé en français. Ces entités-là, apparemment, vont continuer d'exister, mais ces entités-là se rapportent aux RLISS qui, eux, n'existeront plus. Est-ce qu'il y a quelqu'un d'autre que moi qui se rend compte que ça n'a pas de bon sens?

Il y a plein d'autres sections de ce projet de loi-là qui n'ont aucun bon sens. Les francophones l'ont eu dur avec le gouvernement en place, que l'on parle de la cancellation de notre université franco ou du bureau du commissaire aux services en français, et là, les soins de santé qui sont si précieux à tout le monde, incluant les francophones. On risque encore une fois de faire un grand pas en arrière qui va nous amener 20 ans en arrière. Les buts—on n'appuie le projet de loi du tout.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Merci. Further questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Parsa: Listening to my honourable colleague across—he raised some very valid points. Yes, he named some of the hospitals that are in various communities, and he's absolutely correct that our constituents are people—when they send us here, they rely on us to be able to bring their voices here and make sure that their messages are heard loud and clear.

The only thing with that is that the member knows that—he was a senior member in the previous government, and they had 15 years to do some of the things that he mentioned, and the people looked at them the same way,

and none of them was delivered. We had wait times increase. Right now in our hallways in our hospitals, we've got over 1,000 people waiting every day to get care in our hospitals. That grows every day, which is why, in the last election, we took our message to the people of Ontario and we campaigned that we would end hallway medicine, and the people chose us. The people chose change because they weren't listening to them. We have made commitments to end hallway health care medicine. The people have trusted us to do this, and we're going to deliver on that.

Right now the health care system is so broken that it needs immediate change. The minister consulted and is going to deliver on the promises that we made. We're going to be streamlining so that family doctors, hospitals, and home and community care providers work as a team to deliver the right care for the patients. We made a very big commitment to the people that we would end hallway medicine, and we will deliver on that very soon through this government.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the member from Ottawa South for his comments. He had pointed out that access to practitioners is one of the key problems that is facing our health care system. Over here on our side, we absolutely agree. For the last 15 years, we've watched this Liberal government leave our health care system hanging by a thread.

We also have to take a look at the issue of public health care. Public health care is one of those things that is, first and foremost, near and dear to our Canadian and Ontarian hearts. Nobody should render a profit from someone else's illness. That's completely and utterly morally and ethically wrong. We cannot allow legislation that opens the door to that.

In speaking with a number of different OPSEU hospital workers—they mentioned how hospitals have cut in so many different ways, and now they're starting to cut front-line staff. That is the place they're looking for savings. What that's going to result in is that there's going to be less staff than ever before, and there will be fewer people to deal with this hallway medicine crisis. Not only that; their rate of attrition will be quite high in that there will be more staff burnout and more overtime, and any new staff will lack the wisdom and experience of former health care staff who simply could not stand the job anymore.

If we allow private clinics to administer tests—I've heard from a number of constituents who have gone to these clinics and had to have their tests repeated numerous times. The stress on your health, the stress on your mental health, but also on your job—it impacts so many different things. Tests can be done at a hospital, and they should still be done with experts in place who are able to read them. It's not that the physicians at clinics are not willing, it's just simply they maybe lack the expertise that others have.

0920

We need to make sure that health care in this province is publicly funded, publicly protected. Every dollar that is

taken by private companies is one that does not go to Ontarians, and that is wrong.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member from Ottawa South for his two-minute reply.

Mr. John Fraser: I would like to thank the members from Mississauga Centre, Nickel Belt, Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill and London North Centre.

I understand this is a partisan place. I was purposely trying to not be partisan in my comments because I'm interested in going forward, because I can stand in this Legislature and I can point to either party and say, "Here are the gains that we made in health care under these parties." I can also say, "Here are the shortcomings of all three parties." My point is, I'm interested in going forward, and this bill presents some big challenges going forward.

I want you to succeed with health care. I'm not interested in partisan points. It doesn't do anybody any good. It doesn't do me any good. I don't want them.

What I want you to realize is that, number one, the kind of power that you are giving a very small group of people—unelected—and future ministers—unchecked—is not something that your communities will want, especially since they won't have a seat at the table. That's not just our Indigenous partners and our Franco-Ontarian community; that's Whitby. Who owns the hospice in Whitby? Who gets to decide? That's the issue. As I said earlier, I'm going to repeat: We're only here for a short time. Somebody else will be here. There will be a new minister. There will be a new board, and that board will affect the community you live in, that you love, that you support, and that you want to see continue to grow. So you've got to put a balance and check on that power, and it needs to be in that bill. I think we all know that.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I am privileged for this opportunity to rise today and speak on Bill 74, The People's Health Care Act, in this chamber.

An old belief says, "Health is wealth." This holds true across ages and timelines. In other words, the health of the people is the wealth of a nation. The management and delivery of efficient and effective public health care are one of the most crucial responsibilities of any government towards its people. The absence of such a system crumbles the foundation of a just social system and effective governance, thereby posing a formidable threat to social justice.

The policy of a state is deeply embedded into the values that society, and hence their elected government, shares. Therefore, the concern of the state for public health care is more than merely a policy. It reveals and reflects the value that society and a formally elected government believe in, share, and uphold together.

Madam Speaker, in 2008, the year I came to Canada, I had the opportunity to wet my feet in Canadian politics, as federal elections were due. As a volunteer of the Progressive Conservative Party, I knocked on doors and people shared about the issues, dreams and interventions they

seek from the government in different areas. Four main issues people were concerned with were community safety, expensive hydro rates, unaffordable taxation and, last but not the least, inefficient public health care. In 2018, exactly 10 years later, as I was knocking on doors for my own candidacy, those were overwhelmingly still the issues that came up.

If I dare say, it happened because my Liberal friends across the aisle in the past government had a mere desire to maintain power, rather than to serve. Madam Speaker, the past Liberal government was not only devoid of vision and passion, but it was also devoid of integrity, philosophical principles and philosophical consistency. Their policy-making completely undermined the importance of fiscal balance. Their denial of the fiscal imbalance, their refusal to deal with the need to reform had increasingly made it difficult to maintain balanced budgets and deliver quality health care to Ontarians.

Despite continued denial on the part of the previous government, a fiscal imbalance does exist, and we promised that we, as a responsible government, would strive to achieve the fiscal balance without compromising on the quality of education, health care and other important programs for Ontarians.

Madam Speaker, for 15 years, while the Liberal government mismanaged Ontario's finances, it miserably failed to develop a comprehensive health care strategy. That's why we're working with partners in health care to develop a long-term transformational health care plan guided by innovation, integration and the better use of technology. Our government is committed to building a health care system for the future.

As a responsible government, we want to create a sustainable health care system that works for the people of Ontario. With the introduction of Bill 74, The People's Health Care Act, we are seeking to empower through the creation of Ontario Health and their teams, to put the patient at the centre of the provider network. With the new bill, we envisage a community-based health care delivery model that connects care, and includes primary care and hospitals, home care and long-term care, mental health and addictions support, and other health care services that help in improving the quality of life of people in Ontario.

After so many years of all talk and no action, I am proud to be part of a government that is truly for the people and that does what we say we are going to do. I am proud that our government is working hard at making the lives of our people easier and better for families in Brampton and across Ontario. This is the commitment that we made at those doors during the election: that Progressive Conservatives are here, and we are for the people; and also that relief is on the way. People trusted us and asked us to deliver.

Madam Speaker, we have a health care system that is disconnected, and we already know that we are leaving Ontarians behind if we continue to remain in the mode of denial. We cannot afford to wait forever. We need a systemic solution to a systemic problem. Our primary objective is, and always has been, to strengthen our publicly funded health care system.

Madam Speaker, I want to reiterate here that with this new bill we are absolutely not debating about universal access to publicly funded health care, as already mentioned by the honourable minister. The real debate is about the structure and effectiveness of our system that should work for the people. The real debate is about improving the efficiencies of our system that should effectively respond to the needs of our communities in Ontario. We are working together to integrate care, and when this happens, the needs of the whole person will be considered. When health care providers work together, patients would have someone to contact to help them navigate the system, to answer questions and to understand their individual situation in a better-coordinated way. And health care providers would be accountable for the patients in their local communities and would provide care tailored to those needs.

People in Ontario expect their government and the system to work for them and not the other way around. This is exactly why, eight months ago, they asked for a real change. They asked the Progressive Conservative government for the people to invest in them, in their communities, and build a better future for our children and future generations. They asked us to invest in health care. They asked us to help their family make ends meet and to put more money in their pockets and help give them a little more breathing room at the end of the month.

With the introduction of Bill 74, The People's Health Care Act, we're building a public health care system centred around the patient and redirecting money to front-line services, where it belongs, in order to improve the patient experience and provide better and connected care.

The governance model of our government for the people is based on facts, logic and reality, which invariably helps to develop effective policies; whereas policies of our Liberal friends, based on feelings, fantasy and theory, did not lead us anywhere in the last so many years. We're taking action to make life much better and more affordable for families in Ontario.

0930

With Bill 74, we are envisaging building a system where family doctors, hospitals and home and community care providers work in unison as a team. Within these teams, providers can communicate directly with each other, creating a seamless care experience for the patient and their families. We envision a public health care system where patients and families will have access to faster, better and more connected services. Because we deserve better.

Speaker, we believe a thriving and promising economy with a strong bottom line remains incomplete without ensuring some robust provision of public health care, including mental health care. I'm glad to say that our government is making an historic investment of \$1.9 billion in mental health and addictions services, matching the federal government's commitment.

When we invest directly in the health and well-being of Ontarians and their families, we have an immediate impact on the overall outcomes we desire in the short-, mid- and long-term. To end hallway health care, our government is creating 6,000 new long-term-care beds, the first wave of

over 15,000 beds to be built over the next five years, and \$90 million in new money for hospitals to deal with capacity issues during this flu season. In just eight months, we are seeing some extraordinary, tangible results.

Our government committed to the people of Ontario during the election campaign that we would end hallway health care, and we are fully committed to delivering on that promise. It is time we acknowledge the problems before we address them. The fact is that Ontario's health care system is on life support. We are aware that patients are forgotten on waiting lists and that more than 1,000 patients are receiving care in hallways every day. The average wait time to access a bed in a long-term-care home is 146 days. Can we ignore this and afford to be in denial mode forever?

We need to stop sweeping our problems under the carpet. Nothing will get resolved if we continue doing what we did in the past 15 years. Please remember that the acceptance of the existence of a problem is always a prerequisite to its solution. To make this work, we will do what is right. As we continue with our plan, we will do what is hard, just to make sure it makes the lives of all Ontarians easier. We know that we're investing in ourselves and in our future in Ontario.

Patients and families are getting lost in the health care system, are falling through the cracks and are waiting too long for care. This has a negative impact on the health and well-being of patients and their loved ones, both physically and mentally. The health care system is facing capacity pressures today in Brampton and in Ontario. It does not have the right mix of services, beds or digital tools to be ready for a growing and rapidly aging population with more complex care needs.

A public health care system centred around the patient, while redirecting money to front-line services—to improve patient experience and provide better and connected care—is the need of the hour. We need a system where patients are supported when transitioning from one health care service to another—a system that truly puts the patient at the centre of care, where and when it's needed.

Madam Speaker, Ontarians asked us to keep our focus on them so they have the resources they need to live well and to succeed. I'm proud to say that we've always kept our focus on people and on ensuring the resources, as we want them to live well and succeed. As we bring forward desperately needed and overdue improvements to health care in this province, Ontarians will continue to access reliable public health care through OHIP. Our plan will improve the health system so that people have access to faster, better-coordinated public health care, where and when it is needed. Although modernizing the health system will take time, we will continue to listen to the people who plan and work on the front lines, including nurses, doctors and other care providers, as we implement our public health care strategy.

Madam Speaker, the people of Ontario have been and always will be our government's priority and focus. We will create a public health care system that works for everyone. And while doing so, we want to ensure that our government respects your hard-earned tax dollars, and is

committed to bringing accountability and transparency to the taxpayers of Ontario. That is why we want to get the best care for each public dollar we spend. So, we remain committed to delivering on our plan for the people by investing in the priorities that matter to the people of Ontario. The message is clear: Our government is for the people.

Ontario's new plan would improve access to services and patient experience by organizing health care providers to work as one coordinated team, focused on patients and specific local needs. Patients would experience easy transitions from one health care provider to another, with one patient story, one patient record and one care plan.

For ensuring this, The People's Health Care Act, if passed, is also removing a key barrier to better patient care by proposing to reorganize multiple health care agencies into one organization. This has the potential to leverage the world-class expertise provided in areas such as cancer, stroke or cardiac care, and apply it to sectors like mental health and chronic diseases. This would reduce the duplication, redundant administration and layers of bureaucracy in existing agencies.

Through a connected team, patients and their caregivers would have help navigating the system 24/7 and when they need it. In such a case, when a patient needs to move from place to place, such as from hospital to home care, a patient navigator will be there to help coordinate these transitions. This will mean that colleagues across the sector are able to share patient information so we can provide the best, most accurate care for our patients.

When patients have access to this information, they will be prepared for their next appointment and have the peace of mind that comes from knowing their full health team has the latest information about their care. Through these teams, local health care providers are supported to work as a connected team, to provide the coordinated and continuous care their patients need.

In just eight months, we have built up confidence in our middle class and in our economy. That's the fundamental difference between our plan and what happened in the previous Liberal government in Ontario. Now, our new plan on health care would provide the appropriate high-quality, connected care Ontarians expect and deserve.

If this Legislature passes this bill, it would create a single agency: Ontario Health. This would mean increased accountability to make measurable improvements in patient care. This is an opportunity to stop working in silos and, instead, expand things that work well in our health care system.

Our health care dollars should be spent where they have an impact: on patients. Patients should know about the care they need and how to access that care. This new plan is an important step forward, making fundamental changes that will help build a world-class public health care system in Ontario.

I will reiterate, Madam Speaker, that we will invest in Ontarians and give them the necessary resources to live well, create better jobs and grow the economy.

In just eight months, we have done a lot together, and there is much more to do. The future of Ontario is looking

brighter than ever. While working together, we will ensure that our people in Ontario have every opportunity to live well, to succeed, and to build their future and a beautiful society we can all be proud of.

Therefore, through you, Madam Speaker, I would urge all honourable legislators to join me in supporting Bill 74 and let this legislation be passed, and help all Ontarians to build a health care system for the future.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Is Bill 74 important to us? The People's Health Care Act, 2019, is a critical piece of legislation that we've all been waiting for across Ontario. Issues with this province's health care system have affected not only myself but everyone here.

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The residents in St. Catharines know first-hand and have experienced what happens when the cuts were on the front line. The Service Employees International Union, which represents health care in St. Catharines and Niagara, has suffered cutbacks in the past. Housekeepers, which are the backbone of the hospitals, were cut back. What happened in our general hospital? C. difficile. Loved ones across the city lost their families—lost their fathers, their mothers, their brothers, their sisters. A mega hospital was the answer, a P3 in Niagara—a public-private partnership.

The previous Liberal government thought that that was going to be the be-all and end-all, so we have a mega P3. But what happened? The taxpayers of St. Catharines pay \$62 a year extra on their taxes. Did it happen that we cleared hallway medicine? Absolutely not. Did it happen that our housekeepers got more jobs? No. So what I'm afraid of with this new bill is that is that we, Ontarians, are going to have to pay more on our tax bills. It might be hidden underneath, but our front-line workers are going to be the ones who suffer the cost. And what suffers when the front-line workers are cut? The people's health.

I hope that this government understands what happened in Niagara: \$60 more on their taxpayers and C. difficile.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you to the member for Brampton West for his remarks this morning.

I would like to touch on this debate. We all agree that our health care system is broken. Our health care system is broken. It's not just broken; it's on life support. Anybody at my age—we have aging parents, or some people in this Legislature have aging grandparents. We all know people who have gone through the health care system. One thing I know is that we can do better.

I'd like to just share a story about my Aunt Jean, who went through a terrible process through the health care system. As an aging senior—anyone who talks to a senior in the province of Ontario will tell you that we could do better—and we are going to do better as a government.

She was 94 when she passed. Just before almost her 94th birthday, she passed away, living at home. We used to call her. She was living in Thunder Bay. She would say,

“Oh, Christine, I have so many appointments. I can't organize this. Who am I calling next? Where do I go?” Trying to organize these things at 93-plus years of age—we could do better for them.

I think with our approach, an integrated approach, in helping these people with a one-stop place where they can make these calls and help them through the system is the right way to go.

Our party here envisions a health care system where patients are supported and also families are supported. What we want to do—and I know that the member opposite mentioned front-line workers. We are going to invest in our front-line workers. Our nurses are extremely important. We all know that the health care that the nurses give—we couldn't be in hospitals without them. So a shout-out to all of those nurses out there for all of the work that they do.

Moving forward with this bill, I see progress. I see possibilities and opportunities. I'm looking forward to this legislation passing in the Legislature, for good health care for everybody.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Jamie West: We're here today debating Bill 74, as we know it. I want to thank my colleagues from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Ottawa South and, obviously, Brampton West.

For a while now, we've been pointing the finger back and forth about whose problem this was. We know that there was more than a decade of underfunding under the previous Liberal government. We know that during the previous Harris years—the previous Premier, sorry, Speaker—there were 6,000 nurses laid off and 20 hospitals closed. There's lots of blame to go around. But what I heard knocking at doors is that people don't care about blame; they want it fixed.

I should be here today, talking about my friend Kimberly Komarechka. I should be talking about all of the positive things she does: how she invited me to the Coldest Night of the Year walk three years ago, how she has been volunteering for the soup kitchen for years and years, and how she has been holding the Steelworkers Local 6500 together and helping them run for years. But today, I've got to talk about her brother, Danny. Danny was 51 years old, and he died of cancer in a hallway. He died without dignity. I want to read a quote that Carol Mulligan wrote on sudbury.com, the Northern Life newspaper. It says: “Family shocked and angry—not at the hospital or the staff that frantically tried to find him a room, but at a health care system that forced their loved one, and countless others, to die without any dignity or privacy.”

Danny was 51 years old. He was dying from cancer. He was brought into the hospital at 8:20 a.m., and all day those hospital workers scrambled to find a space—a TV room, a shower room, anywhere for him to go. It wasn't until 1 p.m. that they found a small exam room where the family could gather by his side and watch their son, their brother, their family member die. From Harold Komarechka, his father, these are his final thoughts about his son dying: “This is not dying with dignity.”

We need to fix this, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Harris: I had the opportunity to participate in questions and comments back on Tuesday, I believe it was, regarding Bill 74 and the reformation that we're going to have here in the province when it comes to health care. I'm ecstatic about what's going to happen.

They seem to want to get up and talk about how this is a non-partisan issue, and then they want to slam the previous government or what have you for not investing properly. I think when we talk about taking non-partisan issues and moving them forward, let's do it. Let's take a non-partisan issue like health care and move it forward. We can pass the blame around all we want, but when it comes down to it, Madam Speaker, we need to get this done.

Our hospital system, as the member that sits beside me here alluded to, is on life support—pardon the pun. But this is a fact, and we need to make sure that we're taking the proper steps and moving this forward when it comes to modernization, when it comes to pinpointing patient care, one portal for a patient to be able to have multiple services, whether that be arranging for a hospital visit, arranging for follow-up visits, arranging for home care, arranging to have a PSW come into their home, follow-up visits with their specialist or their surgeon, and integrating other parts of the health care system into it, like pharmacies. The member from Peterborough–Kawartha, I believe, a couple of days ago was talking about how his mother had a conflict in medications. These types of things shouldn't happen.

So when we look at being able to share patient records in a digital format between multiple platforms, whether that be your primary caregiver, your specialist, your PSW in your home, I think it's fantastic, and I'm fully in support of Bill 74.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member from Brampton West for his two-minute response.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I want to thank the members from St. Catharines, Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Sudbury and Kitchener–Conestoga for their comments and remarks.

As we are aware, Ontario's health care system is on life support and facing capacity pressures, and it does not have the right mix of services, beds or digital tools to be ready for a growing and rapidly aging population with more complex care needs. This has a negative impact on the health and well-being of patients and their loved ones, both emotionally and physically. We need to come out of denial mode and accept that a systemic solution is needed to address a systemic problem.

Our government is committed to building a health care system for the future while working with partners in health care to develop a long-term transformational health care plan guided by innovation, integration and the better use of technology. We want to create a sustainable health care system that works for the people of Ontario. Therefore, through the creation of Ontario Health and their teams, we envision to finally put the patient at the centre of the provider network. With Bill 74, if passed, we envisage a

community-based health care delivery model that connects care, and includes primary care and hospitals, home care and long-term care, mental health and addictions supports, and other health care services in Ontario. We are committed to enhancing the effectiveness of our system that should work for the people, and we cannot afford to wait forever.

So through you, Madam Speaker, I would again urge all the legislators present here this morning to join me in supporting Bill 74 and help all Ontarians to build a health care system for the future.

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The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Joel Harden: Good morning, colleagues. How is everybody doing?

Interjections.

Mr. Joel Harden: Glad to hear it.

It's an honour to rise on Bill 74, The People's Health Care Act. I want to talk in the time that I have this morning as the critic for seniors about what's not in the bill and about something that ought to be in the bill, because it's something all parties in the provincial election talked about, and that's dental care for seniors. It's not in here, and for every day we delay that decision, I can tell you right now there are grandmothers and grandfathers out there who are suffering.

I wrote a letter to Minister Elliott through the order paper process, and I received a letter back—thank you, Minister—indicating a shared commitment to resolve this problem. I know the Conservative Party in the election ran on a promise to provide dental care to seniors. I'm going to take what was said earlier about actually doing non-partisan work in this space to heart, and in the time I have, I'm going to try to emphasize my commitment as an elected member but also as the critic for seniors to see if we can't summon the will in this sitting of the Legislature to do something about this now, and to provide a little bit of political urgency as to why I think it's important.

Last week, the member for Ottawa South and I—I think the government was invited too; I'm not sure—were asked by the University of Toronto Health Studies to sit at a conference and talk about the transformation of health care. It was edifying for me. I always like being around researchers and students. I was a university professor for many years. It's always a learning process.

We had the opportunity to talk about the transformation we need. What I heard at that panel, time and again, is that the focus on creating economies of scale by centralizing administration, as many people have said, is worthy. We need to get care to the patients, absolutely. But what are the specific, targeted financial commitments we can make to patient care which will have a domino effect through our system, which will actually reap enormous dividends in our system? I'm going to make the case this morning that dental care is actually one of the most significant investments we can make.

What we know right now from the research that I have at my disposal, and I know the government has as well, is

that Ontario has the lowest spending on public dental coverage of any Canadian province: It's 1.3% of dental expenditure in Ontario. That's the status quo. We have the Healthy Smiles Ontario program for children of low-income families, at \$121 million, and we have the Ontario Disability Support Program's dental program, which costs the province \$87 million. After that, there's not a lot else.

I've inquired at home, with the city of Ottawa, and it has an emergency program for low-income people on Ontario Works, but folks there who are caseworkers in Ontario Works for the city tell me that it's essentially a tooth-pulling program. That's what it is. It's not about preventive dental care.

The problem with that lack of capacity—and I'm going to take the member's comment earlier. I'm not going to stand here and blame previous governments. I'm just going to say that the problem with the status quo is that every three minutes right now someone visits a doctor's office in Ontario to seek help for a dental problem. I'm married to a physician and I can tell you, they're brilliant people, but they're not dentists.

What happens when you see a doctor about a dental care problem is, they prescribe pain relief. That doesn't deal with abscesses in a senior's mouth. That doesn't deal with migraines that keep people up at night. It doesn't prevent the onset of pneumonia or more serious heart conditions, which we know are linked to oral health. So what happens in this context, I will ask the House, when only 36% of Ontario seniors have dental insurance through their retiree benefits, and two thirds of the population of elders in this province have nothing? People suffer.

This is a lot of doom and gloom, so let me try to give you some levity from the door in Ottawa Centre—I have a story that I'll share with you from the election campaign.

It happened when I knocked on the Russian seniors residence in Ottawa Centre—the good people at St. Vladimir's Russian Seniors Residence, at 89 Stonehurst Avenue. As many of us do when we knock on buildings, I knocked on that first door and the door opened. It was a senior speaking Russian. I don't speak Russian. What I did is, I pulled out my handy weapon of mass distraction, I powered up Google Translate, and I asked the senior to speak into the phone. We spoke for about three or four minutes and the first thing she talked about was dental care and pain in her mouth. After that four minutes she said, "Okay, I'll give you a break. I actually speak English." She was having a laugh with me; right? Then she said, "You're an aspiring politician; right?" I said yes. She said, "Do you know what you could really do?" I said, "What?" "Get me a boyfriend." So I had the opportunity, in that hothouse of politics that we've all lived in, to have two emotional laugh reliefs, thanks to Viktorina.

But after she poked fun with me for about 10 minutes, she took me on a tour of her entire building, 48 units. She spoke in Russian; she spoke in English. She started talking to me about what they do there, the community they have there that's attached to the Russian Orthodox Church which is right next to their seniors' residence. Time and again, I heard a lot about public transit and the lack thereof

and Para Transpo in our city, and we have some work to do on that—hello, mayor.

But the fact of the matter is, we also have work to do on dental care. I heard it time and again. I heard it from an older gentleman on the same floor as Viktorina who was previously an engineering professor in Russia. He'd come to Canada, as so many people do, repatriated with his family, who had come to Canada for economic opportunities. He talked about how he could not sleep, hadn't slept in four nights, because of the abscesses in his tooth, and how it had gotten so bad that he'd ended up in the Ottawa General Hospital's emergency room and waited for eight hours. He just shrugged his shoulders and said, "Joel, I don't understand how this can be cost-efficient for our system. I don't understand. I don't have the money, as a senior, to avail myself of private dental coverage. I don't have coverage. My kids can't afford to get me dental coverage. Here I sit and I suffer. I cost the public so much money and I feel like a burden." He tells me, "I feel like a burden."

It breaks my heart. We shouldn't have seniors in the province of Ontario feeling like they're burdens because they have abscesses in their teeth. What have they done for us? They've raised children. They've paid taxes. They've worked hard. I think the job of any civilized government anywhere in the world should foremost be to look after our elders and our children and those otherwise disadvantaged. We should just cover those bases, period. This is the reality, and that's the story I heard at the door.

I also want to acknowledge the luck we have in this sitting of the Legislature. Minister Elliott, as she has mentioned in the past, was the patient advocate and was, like my friend from Nickel Belt, the critic for health. There's considerable knowledge with Minister Elliott, with my friend from Nickel Belt, and also with the member from Mississauga Centre, who was herself a front-line nurse. I spoke with her before Christmas, talked about the fact that you were going in to work shifts over Christmas so other health workers could get a break. Good for you, and thank you for doing that.

We have Dr. Fullerton, who is also a practitioner in the health care system. We have knowledge here in the Legislature. Did I miss anybody? I'm sure I probably did.

Interjections.

Mr. Joel Harden: Okay, Laurie Scott as well. Thank you. So we have expertise right here in the sitting of this Legislature to face this problem head-on. The question I have is, why aren't we doing it?

This is what I know, as we continue this debate about dental care for seniors: One of the proudest things I was allowed to do as a candidate for my party was knock on doors in Ottawa Centre and say, "I think we should have dental care for everyone"—everyone, not just the super poor, not just the super rich. It's cheaper and it's more efficient if we ask employers and workers—and the government, for marginalized folks—to ensure we have dental care for everyone.

What will it cost? If you look at our plan, which is still alive, still on the Internet, it will cost \$575 million—not a

trifling amount of money. It would ask employers to pay 75% of the cost. It would ask workers to pay 25% of the cost, but it would ask the province to ante up funds for people making less than \$30,000 a year before tax, and it would ask government to play that backstop role that government ought to.

The question then, as I constructively try to make this case this morning for dental care for everyone, because I know my Conservative friends are going to be asking this—and you ought to, and we ought to, too: How are we intending to pay for it? Well, I have a few ideas about that.

I know, having met, as my friend from London mentioned earlier, with health care workers this week—OPSEU was in the Legislature and I sat down to meet with our friends who work on the front lines—that we could save a lot of money in the health care system in Ontario if we contracted back in laboratory services. We are spending, right now, every year, depending upon whose estimates you believe, \$175 million to \$233 million a year because we have contracted out lab capacity in the province of Ontario. I'm not going to blame any particular government; I'm just going to state a fact. That's what we've done.

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Let me tell you what it means to seniors, because I've talked to a senior in a rural area outside of Ottawa who gave a bone marrow sample—which is excruciatingly painful, by the way: extracted from the sternum, difficult for anybody, let alone a senior, to go through. By the time the sample got to its desired location, the sample had gone bad. Word went back to the patient: “We've got to do it again.” What is going on? If we contracted that work back into the hospital system in the centre of primary care, which is where the patient first interacts, not only would it be better for the patient and better for the practitioner, but we could save this province between \$175 million and \$233 million a year. That's step one.

The first thing I'd invite my colleagues in government to do, and it's a topic for conversation, is to walk back some of the commitments it has made in tax relief to the wealthiest in our province. This would capture me. At the moment, there is a plan under the current estimates—it will be confirmed in the budget that we'll see soon—to finance a tax cut for the wealthiest 10% of our province that will cost us \$275 million. I can tell you, Speaker, my family doesn't need it. I don't need it; my partner doesn't need it.

I had so many moments in the election campaign that were real learning opportunities for me where I knocked on doors in the more affluent parts of our riding and they said, “Joel Harden, the socialist: I'm not voting for you.” I said, “Okay, that's fine. Can we have a talk? Can we talk about what's going on in our community?” And they said, “Sure, let's talk.” I said, “What would you rather: Would you rather a senior being up all night because they have an abscess in their tooth for which they have no coverage, or would you rather the \$4,000 in your pocket? What would you rather?” Nine times out of 10 that voter said, “What are you doing? What are you talking about? Is this just crazy commie nonsense?” I said, “No, it's dental care for everyone.”

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): No props.

Mr. Joel Harden: Excuse me, I know. No props. I'm sorry, Speaker.

But it was real, and I put the policy document in the voter's hand and said, “We can do this. It's costed. The dental practitioners have said it makes sense.” We turned so many voters in the course of our election in Ottawa Centre by making that case to everyone, but particularly to affluent voters, to say that we have led ourselves into a delusion lately that you can have lower taxes and great public services at the same time. That is a delusion. It's an absolute delusion. It doesn't work. Anybody with a scintilla of sense who has run a business, who has overseen any care work for seniors or children, who is, like my partner and I, trying to be a good parent and raise their children, we know that you don't get something for nothing. It sounds great. It sounds great to be able to have money in your pocket to run around and look after yourself, but in the real world where we live, we know that we absolutely have to have a strong system of public services that look after us. There's not only an ethical case for that, to my mind, from a social justice perspective; there's a strong financial case for it.

We know that when seniors and other marginalized groups are accessing dental care through the primary care system—again, this topic is not in Bill 74, which is why I raise it—that costs us \$38 million a year, according to estimates that I've seen. So what would happen if we actually as a society said, “We're going to stop this. We're going to stop this suffering”?

I'm going to encourage my friends in government because I know, at least in the election campaign, the details of which I'm familiar, you campaigned on a platform of covering dental care for seniors with an income cut-off of \$19,300 a year. If a senior was an individual who made that or less, you'd cover them. I'm going to encourage you to go further, go much further. Go talk to your friends in Prince Edward Island—great province. Dental care is covered for all seniors there. Go to the great province of Alberta. In the great province of Alberta, there is a system where these dental procedures are fully covered for all seniors: diagnostic services, examinations and X-rays, preventive services, polishing and scaling, restorative services, fillings, trauma, pain control, pins; extractions, simple and complicated; root canals, endodontics; procedures related to gum disease, periodontics, root planing; and—here's a big one—dentures, full and partial basic dentures. If the senior is earning less than \$31,000 a year, or couples \$63,000 a year, the province of Alberta steps in and says, “We are going to make sure you have dental health when you retire.” That exists. It's the status quo in a province in this country.

We're the richest, largest province in the land. What is stopping us from being able to do it?

I'm going to wager a guess. For advice on this, I'm not going to a traditional doctor; I'm going to go to Dr. Seuss. Dr. Seuss is probably my favourite author and the favourite author of my children. Dr. Seuss wrote a great story

about someone called Yertle the Turtle. Have you heard it? Well, you're going to hear it this morning. It's fantastic.

I think you have to do some work, my friends in government, to convince your Premier to take this issue seriously. What I've seen to date in this government—and I wish it were otherwise—is that it would appear that the Premier's office and the Premier's staff really guide your decision-making. Leadership is important, but I'm worried that at the moment, we have a Yertle the Turtle problem.

Dr. Seuss writes—and I hope it inspires us to act this morning:

On the far-away island of Sala-ma-Sond,
Yertle the Turtle was king of the pond.
A nice little pond. It was clean. It was neat.
The water was warm. There was plenty to eat.
The turtles had everything turtles might need.
And they were all happy. Quite happy indeed.

They were... until Yertle, the king of them all,
Decided the kingdom he ruled was too small.
"I'm ruler," said Yertle, "of all that I see.
But I don't see enough. That's the trouble with me.
With this stone for a throne, I look down on my pond
But I cannot look down on the places beyond.
This throne that I sit on is too, too low down.
It ought to be higher!" he said with a frown.
"If I could sit high, how much greater I'd be!
What a king! I'd be ruler of all that I see!"

So Yertle, the Turtle King, lifted his hand
And Yertle, the Turtle King, gave a command.
He ordered nine turtles to swim to his stone
And, using these turtles, he built a new throne.
He made each turtle stand on another one's back
And he piled them all up in a nine-turtle stack.
And then Yertle climbed up. He sat down on the pile.
What a wonderful view! He could see 'most a mile!

The poem goes on to talk about how more turtles were encouraged to join the pile, until he found Mack, a small, lowly turtle, who said:

"Beg your pardon, King Yertle.
I've pains in my back and my shoulders and knees.
How long must we stand here, Your Majesty, please?"

"SILENCE!" the King of the Turtles barked back.
"I'm king, and you're only a turtle named Mack."

But then later in the story we learn:

Then, again, from below, in the great heavy stack,
Came a groan from that plain little turtle named Mack.
"Your Majesty, please... I don't like to complain,
But down here below, we are feeling great pain.
I know, up on top you are seeing great sights,
But down here at the bottom we, too,
should have rights.

We turtles can't stand it. Our shells will all crack!
Besides, we need food. We are starving!"
groaned Mack.

And later:

But, as Yertle, the Turtle King, lifted his hand
And started to order and give the command,
That plain little turtle below in the stack,
That plain little turtle whose name was just Mack,
Decided he'd taken enough. And he had.
And that plain little lad got a bit mad.
And that plain little Mack did a plain little thing.
He burped!
And his burp shook the throne of the king!

And Yertle the Turtle, the king of the trees,
The king of the air and the birds and the bees,
The king of a house and a cow and a mule...
Well, that was the end of the Turtle King's rule!
For Yertle, the King of all Sala-ma-Sond,
Fell off his high throne and fell Plunk! in the pond!

And to say the great Yertle, that Marvelous he, ...
And the turtles, of course... all the turtles are free
As turtles and, maybe, all creatures should be.

So I invite you to think, as I bring that poem up, of health care professionals and health care workers as those turtles that we've stacked for far too long on the backs of each other, and us, the government, as being Yertle—not any one particular person, but the people who have been trying to ration care and provide it to the folks who need it, who are hurting, and they're going to continue to hurt. One way we can stop ourselves from collectively falling into the muck of the pond is by providing dental care to everyone, and particularly dental care for seniors.

Thanks for the opportunity, Speaker, to speak this morning. I encourage the government to look into this, please.
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1010 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: I'd like to welcome Lark Barker, who is a parent of two kids with autism, and an absolutely wonderful mom, from Beaches–East York. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Laurie Scott: It's my pleasure to introduce Mike Cavanagh, board chair for the Ontario Pharmacists Association—and a local pharmacist, of course, in the riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock—back to the Legislature this year. Welcome, Mike.

I'd also like to welcome two special guests of Thomas Keys-Brasier, my page from the riding: his twin sister,

Lily, and his grandmother, Ann Keys. Welcome to the Legislature.

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: I'm so excited to welcome Amy Smoke, an MSW student from the Indigenous stream at Wilfrid Laurier University who happens to be doing their practicum in my office in Kitchener. Welcome.

Hon. Christine Elliott: I'd like to welcome the delegation from the Ontario Pharmacists Association here today: Mr. Mike Cavanagh, Jen Baker, Bill Wilson, Allan Malek, Sera Lee, Farid Wassef and Sherif Guorgui. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Jamie West: This morning I would like to welcome Carlo Berardi to the Legislature. Carlo is a Sudbury constituent and an Ontario Pharmacists Association board member who is here today for OPA's annual Queen's Park day. Thank you for taking the time to speak with us.

As well, I'd like to introduce two other constituents from the riding of Sudbury, Natalie Croteau and Erica Franco, who are here because of autism. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I'd like to introduce my husband, who is here today to support me on my private member's bill: Paul Demers. He's here for the day.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I'd like to welcome Mr. Rob Gill to the House today. He is here to rally for autism. Thank you for your support.

Mr. Stan Cho: I would like to welcome two board members from the Ontario Pharmacists Association who happen to be Willowdalers as well: Louis Wei and Sera Lee.

Mr. Joel Harden: I have the great pleasure today to have 50 parents from Ottawa who made the trip down here to talk about the need for autism services. It would be too long to read out all their names, but I just want to acknowledge that you're here, and thank you for coming here.

I also want to acknowledge my good friends David Lepofsky and Thea Kurdi, two of the most acknowledged—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I want to remind members that this is not the time for members' statements or for making a political statement. It's strictly introduction of guests.

The Attorney General.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I would like to welcome to Queen's Park for the first time a friend, a constituent and a member of the executive of PC Women in Politics, Diana Cosby. Welcome, Diana.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I have over 20 parents that came from Windsor today for the rally. I want to welcome Meg Ball Rigden and Craig Rigden, who are in the members' gallery; Lisa Klassen, Rob and Lana Iftiniuk, Melissa Grass, April Pare, Melissa LaMarsh, Lillian Lamarsh, Heather Dresser, Margaret Cotter, Melissa Al, Tabitha Goodall, Kelly Whitesell, Meaghan McCulligah, Suzanne McGraw, Jillian Fenech, Livia Congi, Rosanna Perissinotti, Janaiya Toogood, Holly White, and I think I saw my good buddy Michau in the gallery over here to the left as well.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I'd like to welcome a good friend and part of my campaign team, George Hatzis.

Mr. Doug Downey: I'm pleased to welcome my good friend Barb Shakell-Barkey to Queen's Park today. She's here to celebrate with the other Women in Politics. Welcome again.

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I'd like to welcome Peggy Brekveld from the OFA, from my riding, to Queen's Park today.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I want to welcome Maddy Frechette from St. Mary's high school in Pickering and Holly Christopher from Dunbarton High School as they shadow me today and join us for International Women's Day, which is tomorrow. We need to inspire the next generation of leaders. Welcome to them.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'd like to welcome constituents from my riding who are here with the Ontario Pharmacists Association: Tim Brady, Chris Jordan, Sera Lee and Sherif Guorgui; also, Lana and Rob Iftiniuk, constituents and parents of Mason, who are here for the autism rally.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: I would like to welcome a group of concerned parents who drove from Ottawa at 4 a.m. this morning. Thank you to Kate Logue and Jenny Sturgeon for putting this together: Brianna Kuhnle-Ware, Lynne Thibodeau, Martina Pietracupa, Jennifer Perlin, Laura Kefalas, Samantha Hollingsworth, Jennifer Sturgeon, Michael Kitor, Nicole Dautz, Katharine Dudley, Kimberley Conlin, Stephanie Jackson, Meredith Willis, Lori Law, Rhonda Allaby-Glass, Stephanie Brousseau, Mandeep Aujla, Cathy Kiraly, Elise Lanthier-Brun, Scott Corbet and Sadia Javed.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I'd also like to welcome members of the Ontario Pharmacists Association who are here today to meet with MPPs. They are also hosting a lunch after question period in room 228, and all are welcome. I'd especially like to welcome Bill Wilson, Allan Malek, Mike Cavanagh and Jen Baker, who is the incoming board chair. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature a Humber College public affairs class. They are sitting in the east public gallery: Alexandra Ristagno, Alicia Crough, Amanda Nsiah, Amy Howse, Amy Theriault, Bianca Montalbano, Bradley Mills, Brittany Hussey, Cameron Alexander, Catherine, Claudia Pusung, Helena Zychlinski-Mielzynski, Kathy Dwulit, Khamieta Inthahack-Christian, Lauren Darby, Lorna Godwin, Manasvi Noel, Marie Sako, M.J. Hussain, Michelle Murray, Praakrti Hotchandani, Sahana Srikandarajah, Logan Bonnett, Claire Chappell, Victoria Lee, Yana Myronova, Zainab Ramonu and their professors, Anne Marie Males and Professor Andrea Tavchar. Welcome.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park today, from my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, Clarence Nywening, who is a past president of the Christian farmers of Ontario. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You looked the other way.

I'd like to welcome my constituency staff from Waterloo: Sydney Piatkowski and Suzie Taka are here today.

Jennifer Beckett and her daughter Delphine Beckett are here visiting from Waterloo. A special shout-out to Janet McLaughlin, Sarah Jones and Melissa Small and also Kathie Shaw and the staff from A Balanced Approach in Waterloo, plus two busloads of parents for the autism rally.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I'd just like to welcome some other representatives of the Ontario Pharmacists Association who are here today at Queen's Park in the members' gallery, including Michael Cheung, Hitesh Pandya, Tim Brady, Mandip Khela, Deb Saltmarche, Carlo Berardi, Chris Jordan and Connie Beck.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd like to welcome my good friend Sean Simpson, who is here today from Niagara-on-the-Lake with the OPA. I can't say this isn't political: He's a fellow goaltender. I wish him the best at the Thorold Mounts tournament this weekend. Welcome.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Good morning. I'd like to welcome this morning the Italian ambassador to Canada, Mr. Claudio Taffuri, and his wife, Mrs. Maria Enrica Francesca Stajano. I'd also like to welcome the consul general of Italy in Toronto, Mr. Eugenio Sgrò, and consigliere economico commerciale Simona Battiloro. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Speaker, if I can also get your indulgence for one more minute: This morning, I have my daughter, Frances, who is here for the first time in the House, and my wife, who just found out that she is seven years cancer-free.

Miss Monique Taylor: It gives me great pride and honour to introduce and to welcome all of the families, parents and advocates who have travelled from across the province. We have 11 busloads of people travelling to Queen's Park today. I'd like to welcome everyone to the—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.
The member for Cambridge.

1040

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: March 1 marked Professional Engineers Day in Ontario, when we celebrate professional engineers who help drive economic growth in our province. I welcome today to the Legislature Professional Engineers Ontario and thank them for their commitment to improving quality of life and creating good jobs in this province.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I would also like to welcome the parents and families of children with autism who have come here from Parkdale–High Park. Welcome.

Mr. Michael Parsa: I would like to welcome Agnes Curran from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill to Queen's Park, who also happens to be the proud mother of one of our amazing pages, Vanessa. Welcome to the House.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I almost forgot and I would be remiss if I didn't—I'm sure members of the gallery and the chamber would join in with me to welcome the Premier back to the chamber here today. We missed him—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member to withdraw.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Yes, I'm going to ask you to withdraw.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am seeking unanimous consent to do the question of the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I believe the member for Ottawa South is seeking unanimous consent to ask a question in place of the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston. Agreed? Agreed.

ORAL QUESTIONS

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, my question is for the Premier. It seems important to start question period today with the commitment that the Premier made to parents of children with autism when he was looking for votes during the election campaign: “We will be there to support you 1,000%... I promise you, you won't have to be protesting on the front of Queen's Park like you have with the Liberal Premier.”

Today those parents are here and they're protesting on the front lawn of Queen's Park. What does the Premier have to say to them today?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I've talked to hundreds of parents and families of children with autism, and it breaks my heart talking to them. As I've said over and over again, this is the hardest file I've ever dealt with, bar none. But when we came into office, we saw a bankrupt system when it comes to supporting families of children with autism.

Ms. Catherine Fife: You doubled down on it.

Hon. Doug Ford: Actually, we had to run to the treasury. We had to run to the President of the Treasury Board right here to ask for \$100 million just to keep the system going. Then, when we looked into it even further, we saw systemic problems throughout the whole system. The previous government put \$256 million in, Mr. Speaker. We boosted that up to \$321 million to help these families.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I think I need to remind the Premier that it's not about him and it's not about how he feels. It's about how the people of this province with children with autism feel. That's what this is about.

These parents are here because the Premier's plan is an absolute disaster. Some are looking at bankruptcy, deep, deep debt and uprooting their families and leaving the province just so that they can get the therapies and treatments that their children need—the kind of support that the Premier promised—promised—during the election campaign that he would provide.

Will the Premier do the right thing today, Speaker, and scrap this scheme and develop a new plan with new investments to actually meet the needs of children like he promised?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members, please take their seats.

The question has been referred to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Premier, for your leadership on this file since taking office to ensure the bankrupt system that we inherited would make it through to support the 8,400 children currently on the list, so that we can move forward in clearing the wait-list of 23,000 children. Three out of four children in the province of Ontario have been denied service by their Ontario government and we are changing that.

That party opposite used to support clearing the wait-list until this government supported doing so. That party over there supported direct funding until this government here decided we were going to go to that model. And that party over there supported going to regulating service providers until this government decided to move forward with that.

I want to know from the member opposite her plan, what it's going to cost us and why didn't she implement it during the last platform—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Waterloo, come to order.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: —\$3-billion shy budget. She doesn't know what she's talking about. She's not in it for the children; she's in it for professionally protesting.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, hurling insults at parents who are coming here to fight for their children is a disgusting tactic by this minister. May I remind her that in three and a half years' time, when the NDP forms government, we will help families with children with autism.

Parents deserve so much more than what they've gotten from this government. The government's new scheme pulls supports away from parents who desperately need them, away from their children who desperately need them, and it denies treatment to thousands of children unless they can come up with tens of thousands of dollars from their parents' pockets that those parents just don't have. Instead of admitting they were wrong, this Ford government has threatened, bullied and failed to deliver on its promises to parents.

Last night, the government showed that they can reverse a bad decision. That was shown last night. Maybe they could do the same thing this time. Will the Premier do exactly that and scrap this scheme, fire this minister and come back with a plan—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Since assuming office, this government has done a number of things in order to make sure we have a more fair, equitable and sustainable Ontario Autism Program. Unfortunately, the member opposite

would like to continue to see a wait-list of 23,000 children—three out of four children with autism in the province of Ontario. She would like to see diagnostic hubs where there are tons of children on the wait-list. She would like to see an unregulated service provider situation, which is occurring across the province of Ontario. We're not going to stand for that.

That's why, since assuming office, I went to the Treasury Board and was able to receive an extra \$102 million in order to ensure that the program could continue to exist and move 8,400 children through the system as we prepare to get 23,000 children, who are being denied service by their Ontario government, the service that they deserve.

But I still haven't heard, at any point in time, any solution from the members opposite, with the exception of the things that we are delivering on. They asked us to clear the wait-list; we're doing it. They asked us to regulate service providers; we're doing it. They asked us to go to a direct funding model; we're—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Next question.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier—but I can say that what we would like to see and what these families would like to see is a government that keeps its promise to children and families when it comes to autism services.

Late last night, Speaker, as you know, Ron Taverner declined his appointment as the OPP commissioner. While that was the right thing to do and the right thing for front-line OPP officers and the people of Ontario, it does not undo the Premier's role in this whole scandal.

The need to clear the air and address some of the serious concerns about political interference is as great as it ever was. Will the Premier stop hiding and call a public inquiry today?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I want to thank the leader of the police-hating party for the question.

I have the highest degree of respect—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to have to caution the Premier. That sort of language is causing disruption in the House, obviously. You can't use it.

Response?

Hon. Doug Ford: I have the highest degree of respect for the front-line police officers, the OPP and all the police officers across this province. They put their lives on the line every single day to protect our communities and keep us safe.

Since the beginning of this process, our objective has been new leadership up at the OPP to fix the systemic problems that we're hearing non-stop from the front-line OPP officers. Again, I've talked to hundreds and hundreds of front-line police officers and OPP officers across this province, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you, the stories I've heard are appalling. But we're going to fix—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This isn't just about the job that Ron Taverner won't be taking. It's also about the job that was taken from former Deputy Commissioner Brad Blair. It's clear that this was an act of reprisal by a Premier who can't handle dissent.

1050

We can now add Ron Taverner to the list of people who agree with Brad Blair's assessment that his appointment was bad for the OPP and bad for Ontarians. Does the Premier still want to argue that Brad Blair was wrong to raise those concerns, Speaker?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I'll tell you, as far as the rank-and-file officers, they're concerned. We must do better for them and we will do better. We need a new vision for the OPP, one that puts the front-line officers and the safety of the people of Ontario above everything else. Bringing about this change at the OPP will require new leadership and a new vision.

On behalf of our government, I want to thank Ron Taverner for putting his name forward.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Essex, come to order.

Hon. Doug Ford: I can tell you, after 50 years of an impeccable record, I found it disgusting, Mr. Speaker, how he was berated. He was attacked by the opposition—personally attacked—a person who served 50 years, protecting families, community—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Order. The member for Essex is warned—warned.

Start the clock. Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Apparently the Premier wasn't paying attention, Speaker. It was him we were attacking, not Ron Taverner or anybody else. And of course, I would agree; I would actually agree with the Premier that Ontario does need a new leader. Definitely, we need a new leader.

The people of Ontario have a right to know how a friend of the Premier became the front-runner for the top job when he didn't even qualify for the initial posting. And they want to know why a veteran officer, with over three decades on the force, lost his job after speaking out about his concerns. They didn't believe the Premier yesterday and they don't believe him today, Speaker.

A public inquiry will get the answers that Ontarians deserve. Will the Premier stop hiding and call one right now?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members, please take their seats.

Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate the opposition has chosen to politicize this process rather than focusing on and supporting the front-line officers. All they try to do is get cheap political points on the backs of front-line officers, on the backs of Superintendent Ron Taverner.

But we shouldn't be surprised. They have never, ever supported our police. They have never supported our

front-line men and women. I've never seen a more anti-police caucus than the one sitting across from us today. The NDP—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Premier, take your seat. Again, I'm going to caution the Premier, because that sort of language is causing great disruption in the House and I'm going to ask him to withdraw.

Hon. Doug Ford: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Next question.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Taras Natyshak: To the Premier: For months, the Premier has ignored concerns raised by decorated police officers about this appointment. He has brushed away the public concern about the conflict of interest surrounding Mr. Taverner's appointment as the OPP commissioner. Late last night, without warning, Mr. Taverner suddenly withdrew his name.

Will the Premier tell the people of Ontario what happened behind closed doors to prompt his withdrawal?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I find it very ironic coming from the MPP from Essex, who continuously sat in this chamber and criticized Superintendent Ron Taverner over and over and over again.

Mr. Speaker, we support our police. We supported Ron Taverner. And do you know who I feel sorry for? Not just Ron Taverner, who is an absolute champion. I feel sorry for the hundreds of front-line OPP officers that I spoke to personally that were so excited to bring change to the highest ranks of the OPP, a gentleman who would actually watch their backs, have their backs, and protect the front-line police officers. That's who I feel sorry for.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: This government and this Premier had every opportunity to come clean to the public, but instead of doing that, they have blustered, they have threatened and they have bullied anyone who raised concerns. Will the Premier finally stop hiding and call a full and public inquiry into this matter?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, again, I find it ironic coming from the MPP from Essex, who criticizes the police continuously. Another NDP member made racial slurs about the Toronto police chief. Who does that? Who picks up a sign and runs down the street and says, "Eff the police," and still is sitting in caucus? It's unheard of. I can tell you, if anyone did that in our caucus, they wouldn't be sitting in our caucus. But the Leader of the Opposition actually supports that language. They actually support when they say that to the police. That's unacceptable—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Again I say to the Premier—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

I say to all the members: The Speaker is not in a position to judge whether or not a statement is true or accurate

or false in every case, but I would again caution all members that the tone of this debate is deteriorating. We do ourselves a disservice to the extent that we deteriorate our discussion, our debate, during question period into a series of personal insults. It impresses no one.

Next question.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Miss Kinga Surma: My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services and minister responsible for women's issues. Tomorrow is International Women's Day, a day to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. However, there is still a tremendous amount of work to be done to ensure that women feel safe in their communities and empowered across the province.

We know now that one in three women will experience sexual violence in their lifetime. We also know that women are three times more likely to be stalked and three and a half times more likely to be a victim of intimate partner violence. This is unacceptable.

Can the minister outline our government's efforts to empower women and combat violence against women across the province?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you to the member from Etobicoke for raising this very important issue on the eve of International Women's Day, which will be tomorrow. We are right now striving, as a government, to join the world effort to balance for better. This weekend, I will be going to the United Nations with the Canadian delegation so that we can discuss, among other things, women's economic empowerment, sex trafficking and violence against women. These are three key initiatives that have been a priority for me and my ministry.

That's why our government hosted, early on, a women's economic empowerment round table, on which we are going to work with the Minister of Labour, for greater pay equity for women. That's why our government has invested an historic amount of money in violence against women and shelters across this province, to the tune of \$174 million. And that's why tomorrow we will launch consultations with the member from Cambridge as well as the member from Mississauga Centre so that we can build on the important work of the Minister of Labour, so that we can eradicate sex trafficking, or Ontario's dirty little secret, in the province of Ontario. We're going to continue to do that, and I'm looking forward to a statement in the House later on this afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Miss Kinga Surma: Thank you, Minister, for your continued commitment to supporting survivors and raising awareness for this important cause. When we discuss violence against women, it's important that we acknowledge victims of sex trafficking, which disproportionately affects young women and girls.

We learned late last week that three individuals were charged by the Toronto Police Service for sexual assault and for trafficking a girl under the age of 18. No person in

this province should have to experience what that young woman endured. Can the minister please tell this House how our government is taking action to protect women and girls across the province from this heinous crime?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I do appreciate the supplementary. Sex trafficking in Ontario is our dirty little secret, and that's why we must continue to be vigilant against it, to continue to speak out against it and to ensure that we support survivors, who we know are going to be the gateway to help us get those children to see awareness early on.

That is why we are engaging in round table discussions throughout this province with the member from Cambridge and the member from Mississauga Centre. We will be working interministerially with the Ministry of the Attorney General, labour, transportation, education and health. I am co-chairing the federal-provincial task table on sex trafficking across the province and, as I mentioned, this Sunday I will be travelling to the United Nations to discuss this issue.

1100

But let me be perfectly clear. As we move forward, supporting women is very important. Strong women must support vulnerable women, but just as importantly, strong men must support vulnerable women.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is for the Premier. No one believes in this government's autism program. Now three of the regional service providers have spoken out. Principals, teachers and school boards around the province are against it. Advocates and experts think the new program will fail children and they're demanding changes, and parents themselves have been mobilized across the province to fight back.

This government has introduced an astonishingly bad plan that has led to nothing so far but chaos. Why does the Premier insist on pursuing an autism plan that no one supports, and why will he not listen to the families who are here today?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Children, Community and Social Services

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Premier.

As mentioned many times in this House, my parliamentary assistant, Amy Fee, and I travelled across the province. We had over a dozen round tables. We met with stakeholders, and we looked at the broken program that we inherited from the Ontario Liberal Party.

What was unconscionable and unacceptable to me and to this government was that three out of four children were languishing on a wait-list that was endless, with no hope in sight.

Our priority, our motivation is to clear the wait-list so children who were denied service from their Ontario government could get a helping hand and support from their province. Twenty-five per cent of the children were the only ones that were being serviced, so what we've moved to is doubling the diagnostic hubs, the investment, so that

we can get children diagnosed more quickly. We are going to a direct-funding model, where children will be eligible for up to \$140,000 until they're 18 in order to receive the types of supports that they so desperately need, whether that's behavioural therapy, whether that is caregiver support, respite training or technological aids. Our motivation is the 23,000 children who are not getting service.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: This government has failed every step of the way. They created a plan based on a child's age and family income, instead of what a child actually needs. They have strong-armed stakeholders, demanded endorsements and used parents' quotes out of context. They froze and inflated wait-lists to make themselves look better. Their members have supported parents in private, only to backtrack in the public out of fear. They have abandoned all the families and kids that they stood up for under the last government and in the last election.

It's not too late to do the right thing by families and rethink this plan. Will the Premier finally reconsider the changes to the autism program?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members, please take their seats.

The question has been referred to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Speaker.

This will be the plan that we will implement on April 1. I think it's irresponsible for the members opposite to provide false hope to parents that this plan will change.

We have invested an historic amount of money, \$321 million, into a program to clear the wait-list, go to a direct-funding model and ensure there are greater standards—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Hamilton Mountain, come to order.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: —in place for those service providers. We have done everything that the NDP has asked for in the past, and we're going to continue to make sure that we support all children in Ontario who have autism, not just 25% of the children. I think it's important that we clear that wait-list for 23,000—

Miss Monique Taylor: That's a lie and you know it.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I heard that. The member for Hamilton Mountain will withdraw.

Miss Monique Taylor: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The minister should conclude her answer.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I just want to be perfectly clear that on April 1, this will be the plan that we implement and this will be the plan that moves forward, and we will make sure that it's an easy transition into the education system.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mrs. Gila Martow: Our government for the people has been clear in its commitment to get the people of Ontario moving. The gridlock in the province is unacceptable and

making it difficult for Ontarians to get from point A to point B in a timely manner. Ontarians are stuck in their vehicles or on transit far longer than they should be. It takes away valuable time that could be spent with family and friends.

Our government made an election promise to decrease gridlock, and we are doing just that. Our Premier and Minister of Transportation have made some great service expansion announcements already, and I'm excited to hear what more is to come. Can the Minister of Transportation share with the Legislature what his ministry is doing to get the people of Ontario moving?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to thank the member from Thornhill for that question. She truly is a champion of improving transportation throughout the GTHA.

Yesterday I had the pleasure to announce that our government for the people, Metrolinx and the Woodbine Entertainment Group are going to build a new GO station at Woodbine. Listen to this, Mr. Speaker; this is the best news this House could ever hear. This station is going to be built and not cost the taxpayers a dime.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank my parliamentary assistant, the member from Etobicoke Centre, for joining me yesterday and for all the hard work she has continually done on this file. I also would like to thank Councillor Ford for the support he showed at the announcement as well, showing that the municipality of Etobicoke is behind us 100%.

I have more to say on this, but this is a great announcement for the province. It's the second of its kind that we're building, using the private sector to help build it at no cost to taxpayers. It's a good-news—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Mr. Speaker, through you, I'd like to thank the Minister of Transportation for that great answer. I think all of my colleagues will agree this is all good news for Ontarians and yet another way our government is getting the people of Ontario moving.

Public transit is vital for the people of Ontario, and yesterday's announcement by the Minister of Transportation is important not only to transit users in Etobicoke and western Toronto, but to the whole GTHA. Whether Ontarians are travelling for work, for school, to see a game or just to meet a friend for coffee, our communities depend on our province's transportation system. This is why we need new, more efficient transit infrastructure to move people faster and ease the congestion on local roads and highways. Our government is delivering on that promise.

Can the minister share more about the new GO station at Woodbine?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thanks very much for that second question. This new station will be on Highway 27 near Woodbine Racetrack, right on the existing Kitchener GO rail line. The new station at Woodbine will help to increase transit access to nearby landmarks like Woodbine Mall, Humber College, the University of Guelph-Humber and the Etobicoke General Hospital.

Our government for the people is putting transit users and taxpayers first with our agreement that this new station will be paid for by business partner Woodbine Entertainment Group. Woodbine's plans for development around the station will bring new jobs, housing and entertainment to Rexdale. Transit-oriented development is an approach that allows us to take a more strategic look at our real estate portfolio.

Mr. Speaker, this is a development that promises the best results at the best cost to taxpayers. The new GO station at Woodbine and the development around it are good news for transit riders. We have a lot more coming forward and it's going to be benefiting not only the GTHA but Ontario as a whole. Ontario is on the move.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Premier. Twenty Windsor parents of children with autism are here today. They are angry with the Conservative government's decision to deny thousands of families crucial funding for autism supports and services.

Meg is a mother of two kids under the age of five, both on the spectrum. She was at the autism round table in Windsor and felt that the families present offered reasonable suggestions, believing that they were being heard. Then, just days later, the full program was announced. Meg says her world was upended. Her hopes for her kids' future, her career and the happiness of her family were all dashed.

April Pare, another parent from Windsor, helped organize a rally in Windsor opposing this PC plan.

What does the Premier have to say to Meg and all the parents here today? There are lots more out on the lawn right now whose kids will suffer as a result of his phony consultation and callous cuts.

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

1110

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Premier. To Meg and to April, we have decided that we would have a priority of clearing the wait-list for children who were languishing on it for years on end, children who were being denied service, 23,000—

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I have to interrupt the minister and ask the person who is demonstrating—you can't do that, and if you continue to do it, we'll have to ask you to leave.

The minister can conclude her response.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Look, it angers me that the government previous to this administration was running a program where three out of four children were denied service by their Ontario government. That is why we are moving toward an historic investment of \$321 million to support every child with autism in the province of Ontario. We are doubling investment into diagnostic hubs. We are going directly to fund parents so that we can empower them to make the choices that are in the best interests of

their children so that we can ensure that not one out of four children in Ontario is getting service but four out of four children are receiving—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'd ask the opposition to come to order.

Supplementary? The member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you, Speaker. My question is also to the Premier. I want to remind the Premier and the minister responsible, this is not just about a wait-list. This is about services for people who need them in a rich province currently spending \$1.2 billion on tax cuts for the wealthiest and for companies.

I want to talk about Kate Logue from Ottawa, who is Desmond's mom. Desmond has high-spectrum autism. He has, through his therapy, said the words "mom" and "dad" for the first time.

Speaker, in a rich province like Ontario, why is it appropriate that Kate has to cash in her RRSP to continue Desmond's therapy? Premier, is this appropriate? Is this the kind of Ontario you want to lead?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, I'll remind members to make your comments through the Chair.

The question has been referred to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: My heart goes out to Kate and to Desmond. My heart goes out to the 23,000 children who are being denied service—

Ms. Andrea Horwath: They want your help, not your heart.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Leader of the Opposition, come to order.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: —and who are on a wait-list that was endless. I think we had to make a decision in order to ensure that every child with autism in the province of Ontario would receive some support.

What I haven't heard to date from the New Democrats is what their plan is and how much that will cost. Why are they providing false hope to parents across Ontario? We've been very clear. Our priority is to clear the wait-list. We are going to do that in the next 18 months. We're going to provide for a seamless transition—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Hamilton Mountain, Leader of the Opposition, come to order.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: —into the education system. That is what our plan is. We are leading with compassion and we are going to implement this plan on April 1.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Premier. We need to take a moment here and look around. There are hundreds of people here, families who have come a long way. They've come a long way to express their genuine concern. They're going to be rallying on the front lawn of the Legislature. They're here.

Premier, will you join them on the front lawn right after question period?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: The member from Ottawa South has a great deal of audacity to stand in this place, after having worked for the former Premier Dalton McGuinty, who took those same parents to court who protested his previous administration and who they left a bankrupt system to. Not only was—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Leader of the Opposition, come to order.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: —a \$15-billion deficit. We inherited a broken autism program. For 15 years, they had moments to look around, and they chose to allow a wait-list to grow to 23,000 children—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Hamilton Mountain must come to order.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: —who were denied service from their Ontario government. The difference between me and the member from Ottawa South is—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Leader of the Opposition must come to order.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: —I'm going to clear that wait-list with the help of this government, so every single child with autism in the province of Ontario gets the support they need.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you, Speaker, but I can't thank the member for that answer.

Families are here today because they're asking for our help. They're here because they want someone to listen to their concerns, to sit down with them and work with them to ensure that their child's needs will be met.

Our job here is to hear the voices that are hardest to hear. All these people, all these folks are here because they are the voice of those who cannot speak. Premier, that's why you need to be on the front lawn and listening to them. It's important. It's very, very important.

Through you, Speaker, I'm asking the Premier two things. First, will he please come out to the front lawn of the Legislature and spend some time with these families? And two, parents have lost confidence, and they need a fresh set of eyes and ears on this file. I would ask that the Premier do that respectfully.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The question has been referred to the minister.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: That member lacks credibility on this file. That member was part of the government that took parents of children with autism to court. He was part of a government that bankrupted the Ontario Autism Program, which forced me and this government to get an emergency \$102 million just to keep the program running for 25% of the children.

We have decided that we would double our investment into diagnostic hubs so that we could clear the wait-list on diagnoses—which his government allowed to fester. We have decided we are going to go to a direct funding model,

which parents have asked for, so that they can go directly to the best support that their children need.

We are going to make sure that we clear the wait-list of 23,000 children so that all those children have a fighting chance. Speaker, let me be perfectly clear: We are motivated by clearing this wait-list, and a seamless entry and transition into our education system. That is what this government will do on April 1.

WASTE DIVERSION

Ms. Donna Skelly: My question is for the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. We have brought forward our made-in-Ontario plan that will take action to preserve and protect our environment without imposing another tax. Yesterday, the minister released his waste discussion paper, which will play a crucial role in our government's next steps toward cleaning up our province.

My private member's motion, which will be debated later this afternoon, helps to address the need for diverting waste out of our landfills by encouraging retailers and consumers to donate their used clothing to charity. Reducing the amount of textile waste in our landfills is an important issue that needs to be addressed, given the environmental cost of today's fast-fashion trends.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain why supporting initiatives like mine is important to help sustain Ontario's environment for the future?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Speaker, through you to the member from Flamborough—Glanbrook: Congratulations to her on the private member's bill she's bringing in. This is just the kind of constructive initiative that, frankly, we'd like to see from the NDP. It is absolutely aligned with the sorts of things that are necessary.

We, as Ontarians, put a tonne of waste each into landfill—a tonne of waste each and every year. We are diverting less than 30% of that waste. That is not acceptable in 2019. We have to do better. We have to do better through constructive proposals like the one the member brings.

That is what our waste proposals are talking about. That is why we are consulting with Ontarians. We are going to be talking about organics. We are going to be talking about plastics. We are going to be talking about diversion. We are going to be talking about all the best technologies that are available in the world to make sure that we are taking the litter off our streets and we are putting waste where it belongs, not into landfills.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Donna Skelly: More than 24 billion pounds of unwanted clothing end up in landfills. Only about 1% of donated clothing is actually recycled. We are hoping that this motion will encourage manufacturers to invest in the technology to recycle more clothing.

This is just one example of a way Ontarians can reduce waste that is headed for landfills. I've spoken to many constituents who have great ideas to share and want to play a part in cleaning up our province. Ontarians understand that real environmentalism starts close to home, and

they're ready to move forward on a cleaner, more beautiful Ontario.

Can the minister share with this House what goal the waste discussion paper hopes to achieve?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Again, through you, Mr. Speaker, to the member: These are exactly the kinds of questions that our paper asks. What can Ontarians do? What can producers do? The bill that the member is presenting works collaboratively with producers. That's what we need to do in partnership with producers, municipalities and all the interested parties.

To the question, we will be looking at how we decrease the amount of waste going to landfill, increase the overall diversion rate—which, as I said, has been stalled at 30% for 15 years; not good enough. We're committing to making producers responsible for the waste generated by their products and packaging; we're going to outline ways to explore how we get value from waste and create less waste as a result; and we're dedicated to providing clear rules around compostable products, packaging, and to supporting a sustainable economy for Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, this is another example of this government's efforts to balance a healthy environment and a healthy economy. That's what we'll do for Ontarians.

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AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: My question is to the Premier. With us today is my constituent Susan, who has a wonderful son with autism spectrum disorder who has high needs. Right now, he receives highly skilled, one-on-one care. He has someone who helps him use the toilet, has taught him to speak a few words and helps him stay safe. That level of care costs over \$70,000 a year. Her family currently receives support through the Ontario Autism Program, but now, in less than 30 days, her family will only receive \$5,000. Can the Premier explain to Susan why her son doesn't deserve to receive adequate funding so that her son can stay safe?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members please take their seats.

The question has been addressed to the Premier and referred to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Premier, and thank you very much, Speaker. To the member opposite and to Susan: Her story is one that I've heard throughout Ontario. I've also heard from 23,000 others who are being denied service and really had no hope at the end of the tunnel.

Our motivation is to ensure that four out of four children, 100% of the children who require support from their Ontario government, receive it. That wasn't the case under the previous Liberal administration. The fair, equitable and sustainable approach is to make sure that we double

our investment into diagnostic hubs, go directly to fund parents—

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the person who is disrupting Parliament to stop. She has to leave.

The minister can conclude her response.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks, Speaker. That's why we're moving to a direct funding model—so that parents can have up to \$140,000 per child so they can choose the services that best work for their family.

Speaker, let me be perfectly clear. This is the program that we're implementing on April 1. Our motivation is to clear the wait-list so every child in Ontario with autism, not just one out of four, receives support from their Ontario government. That is the commitment we have made. That's the plan that we have put forward, and that's the plan that will be implemented on April 1.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Opposition will come to order.

Supplementary, the member for Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Again to the Premier: I want to assure members of the gallery, visitors here today, families, that New Democrats hear you and we hear those out on the front lawn—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to interrupt the member once again. You're not here to address the people who are in the galleries. You're here to make your comments through the Speaker.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Speaker, from my riding, Lana and Rob are the parents of a beautiful boy named Mason. Mason has moderate to severe autism. Lana confided in me that she can't afford Mason's therapy on her own. He'll be five by the time the new plan is in motion and the funding he will receive will only cover a few hours of therapy for a month or two. Lana says, "Giving them an hour or two a week requires them to start over every session of therapy. This will never help our child progress. In fact there will be a lot more regression before ever moving forward."

Premier, why is your government forcing Mason to go without the therapy he desperately needs?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members, please take their seats.

Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks very much to the member opposite for bringing Lana and Rob's story and telling me a little bit more about Mason.

Our motivation is to make sure that every child with autism in the province of Ontario receives some level of support from their Ontario government. That wasn't the case, Speaker. It was unfair, unconscionable, inequitable and unsustainable to only support one in four children, or the 8,400 children who are in service right now.

We have an obligation to every child in the province of Ontario who has autism to receive a level of support from their Ontario government. That's what I'm committed to doing. That is the plan this government is putting forward.

That will be the plan that will be implemented on April 1, so that we can clear the wait-list of 23,000 children who were not receiving any level of support from their Ontario government. That is our motivation. That is what we are going to do.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Deepak Anand: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. I would like to thank the minister, the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for attending the job announcement at SodaStream last Tuesday. It's great to see a global company like SodaStream investing in our province, opening their first-ever production facility in Canada right here in Ontario, creating 28 new jobs in my riding of Mississauga–Malton.

I know the minister and our entire PC caucus have been working hard, creating an environment where businesses want to grow, invest and, more importantly, create new jobs. Could the minister please outline to the House why global companies like SodaStream are choosing to set up a manufacturing facility right here in Ontario?

Hon. Todd Smith: It was great to be out in the member's riding on Tuesday morning as we celebrated the grand opening of a new facility, an Israeli company known as the "island of peace" in Israel. It's doing outstanding work in Israel, making a great product that is sustainable and environmentally friendly. I was pleased to be there along with the member, who is doing a great job in Mississauga–Malton, my friend the Minister of Agriculture and agri-food and the Premier, to celebrate this company.

Companies like SodaStream are choosing to set up and expand here in Canada, and that's great news. I think it proves that the work we're doing—that we're making a change in the way that Ontario does business—is getting through to companies not just across Ontario, but companies around the world that are looking to locate here. We're doing things like cutting red tape. I'm getting great support from all of the different ministers around the table and other members of our caucus, who are helping us to eliminate that burdensome red tape. We're reducing electricity costs, stabilizing those costs, and reducing taxes as well, to make sure that Ontario is open for business to all who want to invest here.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Minister, thank you so much for your commitment.

With overall unemployment at 10% and with 25% unemployment in youth in the riding of Mississauga–Malton, I know the businesses and workers in my riding are glad that our government is making Ontario a better place to invest and create jobs.

After 15 years of having a government that never saw a piece of red tape they didn't like, our government is flipping the script and reducing the regulatory burden. We are making Ontario open for business and, more importantly, open for jobs. The announcement at SodaStream is proof

that our plan is working. I'd like to thank you on behalf of my riding.

Can the minister please inform the House of how our government will continue to make Ontario an attractive place to invest?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks again to the member from Mississauga–Malton. It's great to celebrate, like we did on Tuesday, a brand new company that's expanding here in Ontario.

I can tell you that every day, businesses are deciding where they're going to locate around the world. Be it here in Ontario—which is obviously where we hope they choose—Quebec, Michigan and Ohio, you name it, they're all competing for these businesses to locate in their jurisdiction. That's why we want to make those jobs land here in Ontario and do everything we can to do that. That's why, as the member references, we eliminated or repealed the job-killing parts of Bill 148, which was brought in by Kathleen Wynne and the Liberal government.

I can tell you that in the meetings we've had with business owners, Speaker, since we became government, they are singing from the rooftops when they get the news that we are eliminating red tape and making it easier for them to do business in Ontario—things like Bill 47, the Making Ontario Open for Business Act, and now the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Next question.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, I received a letter from seven-year-old Lily. She has a question for this government, and here's what she wrote:

"My name is Lily. I have a twin named Landon and I love him so much.

"It was bad to take the money from the kids who need help to learn stuff. Please help the government to change their minds.

"How would they feel if they had a brother with autism? I hope they would help them.

"Thank you from Lily."

My question is to this government and to this entire Conservative caucus: What are you doing to these kids in the province of Ontario? It is unethical. It is unconscionable. You must do better for Lily's brother and for all of those parents and all of those kids who are on the front lawn at Queen's Park today.

1130

Hon. Christine Elliott: Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Deputy Premier.

I appreciate the member opposite and her passion. I think it's important that we consider the 23,000 children who were being denied service, the 23,000 children who were not being supported by their Ontario government, the

23,000 children who were on a wait-list, who were not getting any level of support from their Ontario government.

What's unconscionable is that the previous Liberal administration left us a broken and broke system that denied these children—three out of four children in Ontario—service. That is why I had to go back to the Treasury Board for an extra \$102 million: to ensure that 8,400 children currently on their way into the system would receive support, but also to give us the time so we could redesign a program and invest \$321 million into all children.

That's why we are doubling our investment into the diagnostic hubs. That's why we are going to a direct funding model, and that is why we are going to regulate the professionals in this industry.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary? The member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Again to the Acting Premier: Speaker, Lindsay Frechette came on the bus today from London West on behalf of her 11-year-old son, Felix. When Felix was diagnosed with autism at age three, he was also diagnosed with cancer. Lindsay says if she had been told, "Here is your budget to pay for his cancer treatment and when you have used it up, too bad," Felix would have died.

Lindsay describes life as an autism parent as, "Wait and fight, wait and fight." Felix waited years for diagnosis and Lindsay fought for his treatment. He's been doing well with current autism program supports, and Lindsay is terrified of what will happen to him when those supports are gone.

Speaker, why is this government abandoning Felix and parents like Lindsay?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Please take your seats. Minister?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: The example of Felix having to wait forever almost, for years, for a diagnosis is exactly the changes that we want to make so that we can clear the wait-list, so that children will be diagnosed more quickly, and we can then start to fund their parents so that they can choose the types of supports that best support their child, whether that is behavioural support, whether that is caregiver training, whether that is respite or, finally, technological aids. That is the movement we want to go toward because we believe every child in Ontario with autism should receive support.

The Ontario New Democrats clearly think we should only be supporting 25% of the children. I think that's unacceptable. That's what's unconscionable. It was inequitable. It was unfair, and the system that we inherited seven months ago was unsustainable.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would ask the person who is disrupting Parliament to stop.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You have to leave. Once again, you cannot disrupt Parliament.

MINING INDUSTRY

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines. Our government has been working tirelessly since we've been elected to get Ontario's economy back on track. That means listening—listening to the large employers and job creators in key sectors of our economy on how we can support them.

Unlike the previous government that stood in front of employers and got in their way, we are standing behind the employers, pushing them forward, reducing the red tape, reducing electricity costs and creating good-paying jobs.

Many people talk about issues in our mining sector. I understand that our Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines has been doing a lot of work in this sector, and struck a working group at the last PDAC meeting.

Could you please elaborate on this group that you struck, Minister?

Hon. Greg Rickford: I appreciate the member from Barrie–Innisfil asking this important question. Not a moment too soon, Mr. Speaker, we struck a mining working group that will be busy over the next couple of years, fundamentally transforming a sector that sadly has moved largely out of province when it comes to capital, who are dispirited and are calling on this government to reduce red tape, to make tax conditions more favourable, to move Ontario into the pole position as the preferred destination to do the business of mining and actually mining.

Mr. Speaker, we assembled business leaders, Indigenous engagement, the finance sector, engineering—people who build mines and operate mines. They were there, emboldened by the presence of the Premier, taking notes, making sure that these things, in the coming months and the coming years, will be supported as we re-establish Ontario's place and position as the number one place to do business when it comes to mining.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you for that answer. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the minister for sending the clear message that Ontario's government for the people is making the mining sector open for business. It's a key piece of our government's broader plan to make our province the economic engine of Canada again, stimulating our economy and going on to create more jobs—jobs like in the mining sector. These are good-paying jobs, and I'm excited that our government is reducing their red tape so that we can be even more competitive in this global economy and the global mining industry.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister if he can elaborate on the positive impacts that the mining sector has on the Ontario economy.

Hon. Greg Rickford: It was just great to be back at PDAC. For 87 years, they've been the face of a vibrant, sustainable minerals industry. Some 8,000 members—25,000 people—attended this year from over 135 countries. In Ontario, mining matters: 26,000 direct jobs and 50,000 indirect

jobs. They in many instances build our towns and cities across northern Ontario from the ground up.

But the NDP member for Timiskaming–Cochrane apparently said this week that the problem isn't regulations. He should tell Vale that. He should tell Glencore, Noront, Barrick Gold, the Ontario Prospectors Association. They may be the no-drilling party, they may be in the business of not doing prospecting, but we stand with the mining sector, Mr. Speaker, and we're committed to being the destination for mining business worldwide.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. Gurratan Singh: My question is to the Premier. Johnny and Sue Lee are here from Brampton East. Their two children, Makayla and Taylor, both have autism. Before, Makayla couldn't talk and would have violent outbursts, but with therapy, that changed. She now talks with her family, listens to her parents and plays with her siblings.

Her brother Taylor, however, has been on the wait-list for a year and a half. Under this government's changes to the autism program, Taylor will not be able to get the same access to therapy that helped his sister succeed.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier look into the eyes of Johnny and Sue Lee—they're there in the front row; look into their eyes—and tell them that their family doesn't deserve support?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members, please take their seats.

The Premier has referred the question to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much. I appreciate you bringing Johnny and Sue Lee's—

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You cannot disrupt Parliament. You're going to be asked to leave.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You have to leave.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You can't disrupt Parliament. You have to stop.

Minister, response.

1140

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Speaker. Taylor is the reason that we wanted to move toward these reforms so we can clear the wait-list of 23,000 children. Children were trickling off our wait-list. They were on it for years on end. That was simply unacceptable to me and to this government, which is why we are moving to clearing the 23,000 wait-list within the next 18 months. Under our reforms, families will receive a childhood budget so they can purchase eligible services that they value the most from the providers that they trust.

Speaker, we are moving to this model because we believe every child with autism in the province of Ontario deserves support from their—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You have to leave. Member for Brampton North.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. Kevin Yarde: My question is to the Premier. Due to heartless changes made to the Ontario Autism Program, eight-year-old Vincent from Brampton will be forced out of therapy and forced into school. Vincent is not ready for this change. He has come so far, Mr. Speaker. To pull Vincent out of therapy now, especially without a transition plan, will cause him to regress. Schools are not prepared to accommodate Vincent and children like him.

Will the Premier tell us how much more pain must Ontario families endure before the Premier recognizes that this is a bad plan and directs his minister to go back to the drawing board?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: This will be the plan on April 1. The NDP are providing false hope to families. We are moving forward with this plan.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, you cannot disrupt Parliament from the visitors' galleries.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I have to ask that the person protesting be removed.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You have to leave, as well.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You have to leave.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You have to leave, as well.

Next question?

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE POLICY

Mr. Kaled Rasheed: My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. Another year has gone by and the federal government still hasn't fixed the crisis at the border. According to the federal government's website, the RCMP intercepted 888 illegal border crossers seeking to enter Canada between ports of entry last January. Once processed, we know a significant number of crossers are migrating to Ontario while they wait for their asylum claim to be heard, placing an added strain on our already-stretched municipal services. The Toronto Sun reported last week that city officials say an average of 18 to 20 new refugee claimants are seeking shelter each day.

Can the minister tell this House how our government is holding the federal government accountable for their failed border policies?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: As the minister also responsible for immigration and refugee resettlement in the province of Ontario, we have been working with the federal government, calling on them to reimburse this province up to \$200 million, and escalating, in costs associated with the irregular, illegal border crossings that are happening in the province of Quebec.

To date, we have negotiated terms of reference with the federal minister, Bill Blair, and we are looking actively into getting compensation for our two major municipalities, the city of Ottawa and the city of Toronto, which have incurred almost \$100 million in emergency shelter costs that are placing an additional pressure on our system.

We're going to continue to press for additional costs that we have received as a result of this in the education sector and through legal aid. I'm looking forward to working with the member and with the federal government to ensure that we get this under control.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Windsor West has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services concerning the Ontario Autism Program. This matter will be debated Tuesday, March 19, at 6 p.m.

I would now ask the pages to assemble.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I should have mentioned earlier that in the Speaker's gallery today is Kristen Colquhoun, who is a teacher at Centennial public school in Georgetown, and who is visiting her student and one of our pages, Siya Aggarwal. Welcome to Queen's Park.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Now that they're all here, it's time for us to say a word of thanks to our legislative pages.

Our pages are smart, trustworthy and hard-working. They are indispensable to the effective functioning of this chamber and we are indeed fortunate to have them here. Our pages depart having made many new friends, with a greater understanding of parliamentary democracy, and memories that will last a lifetime.

Each of them will go home, continue their studies and no doubt contribute to their communities, their province and their country in very important ways. We expect great things from all of you. Maybe some of you will someday take your seats in this House as members or work here as staff. We wish you all well.

Please join me in showing our appreciation to this group of legislative pages.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): This House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1147 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Catherine Fife: I just would like to welcome my constituency assistants, Suzie Taka and Sydney Piatkowski, to the House today. All of us know we can't do this work alone. We're very lucky to have you.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I have a number of guests here in the gallery to support my private member's bill. I have Lindsey Narraway and Kevin Strooband. From the riding, I have a number of representatives from the Etobicoke Humane Society, including their president, Cristina Scassa; Marta Etynkowski; and Nadine Kloetzel. Also from my riding, I have Tony Vella and Irene Borecky, Dr. Paul Eckford and Sarah McDowell from the Canadian Kennel Club, and a number of other guests from across the province. Thank you very much for being here to support my bill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to welcome Shelley Austin from Thornhill as well as Rivy Blass. Welcome, and thank you for being here.

REPORT, THIRD LEGISLATIVE REVIEW OF THE ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, 2005

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm advised that the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility has a point of order.

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: I beg leave to inform the House of the tabling of Listening to Ontarians: The Report of the Third Legislative Review of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

I would like to thank the Honourable David Onley for his hard work on the report over the last year. I'm proud to report that our government has tabled this report faster than the previous two reports.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: International Women's Day is tomorrow, and it's important to recognize just how anti-women-and-girls the government's disastrous new autism defunding plan is. The program treats all children with autism as though they all have the same needs and therefore dramatically disadvantages kids with the greatest challenges, but it is also profoundly inequitable with regard to women and girls.

As economist Mike Moffatt notes, childhood budgets are designed to heavily tax second incomes. Women make less than men on the dollar, so the policy effectively tells them to stay home. It becomes prohibitively expensive for many women with kids with autism to work.

Second, the second-income tax effectively discourages single parents of kids with autism from remarrying. It is possible that they would end up owing the system dollars they have already spent when their household incomes

increase. Because women earn less than men, this is going to disproportionately disadvantage moms.

Finally, the program is designed to give more dollars to younger kids than to older ones. Girls are typically diagnosed later than boys, so their childhood budgets will tend to be lower, which means the odds are stacked against their ability to reach their potential.

It is deeply and profoundly hypocritical for the minister to be praising women while enacting policies that actively hurt them. The government needs to fix the autism policy before it comes into force on April 1.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to have to ask the member to withdraw her unparliamentary remark—

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: Withdrawn.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): —and conclude her statement.

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: The minister needs to go back to the drawing board.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very happy to welcome Shelley Austin from my riding of Thornhill here today. We're going to be debating Bill 65 in a little while, presented by my colleague the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore—it's An Act to establish the Companion Animal Wellness Review Committee. Shelley is visiting here. I wanted to give a little statement because she is involved in dog rescue.

Dogs Without Collars Rescue is what it's called, and she does it with another colleague of hers from the board of the Toronto Humane Society. She has been a member of the board since 2016, and she's running again for another three-year term. I'm sure they're going to need her and want her to stay on for even longer than that.

They transfer dogs from Egypt and Thailand. We know that the animal welfare in many countries is not like here in Canada, but we still want to see improvements here as well. We want to support Shelley and all the other volunteer drivers for Freedom Drivers Animal Rescue Transport, which transports at-risk animals from high-kill shelters in Quebec to rescues and foster homes in Ontario.

I'm glad you could be here today. I'm glad that we have so many supporters for my colleague's bill. I'm looking forward to the debate and hearing from all members of the House their support for the bill as well. We know that there's a lot more work, and we have to work together to ensure that all animals in our communities, all the companion animals, are getting treated with respect, and that people have the knowledge that they need to treat those animals with respect.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Catherine Fife: On Sunday, March 3, the MPPs from Kitchener Centre and Hamilton Mountain and I hosted an emergency town hall on autism in the Kitchener South–Hespeler riding. We held it there because promises

were made by the member from Kitchener South–Hespeler to the autism community that were not honoured. After years of working with her as autism advocates against the Liberals, I thought that we would always share the common goal of improving the lives of children with autism.

Some of the families that came to the town hall said that they voted for the Conservative members from Kitchener South–Hespeler and Cambridge because they promised to deliver more funding and services for their kids. It's clear those members have failed these families by supporting the flawed Ford government's new autism program. Parents feel betrayed. They are angry, they're confused and they are afraid of the uncertain future that will be their reality on April 1, and nobody from the Ford government is listening to them. Addressing the wait-list is laudable, but it should never come at the expense of children who are receiving therapy they need to thrive. This new program balances the books on the backs of some of the most vulnerable Ontarians.

At the town hall, we heard from a researcher who said this plan will actually cost the province more in the long run. We also heard from grandparents who were hopeless and crying, and we heard from nine-year-old Addison, whose six-year-old brother, Andrew, has autism. She just wants her brother to have a fighting chance.

Ensuring that no child receives a chance is not equity. It is callous, it is cruel, and these parents who are out there right now will never give up on their children—nor will we.

POLICE

Mr. Billy Pang: I recently met with the York Regional Police chief, Mr. Eric Jolliffe, along with the deputy chief of operations, André Crawford, and Superintendent Chris Bullen regarding the series of break-ins and store robberies that took place in Markham. The York Regional Police have been working diligently on this file and continue to provide the residents of Markham and beyond quality and professional policing services. Mr. Jolliffe and his colleagues were extremely knowledgeable and aware of the events, and reassured me that Markham and, more broadly, York region are in good hands.

I am also aware that our police officers deserve more respect. Under the previous government, the professionalism of our force was being compromised with the enactment of the Police Services Act. However, this will be and has been changed under our government. I'm proud to stand alongside the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the Honourable Sylvia Jones, in support of our police officers through the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act and allowing them to continue their great work within our communities without the fear of being reprimanded for simply doing their jobs.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: It is always an honour to rise here as the member from my lifelong community of

Humber River–Black Creek. I've been meeting with groups and individuals across my riding—seniors' groups, school parent councils, associations and non-profits—and they've shared their concern at the direction this government has taken us. They have told me that things are going from bad to worse.

My community used to have a hospital at Jane and Finch, a place where many of my neighbours were helped when they were sick, a place where many were born. The previous government closed it down against the will of our community, but now this government wants to tinker with our health care system.

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We remember the Conservative legacy on health care: hospital closures, front-line staff fired. Ontarians do not trust this government when it comes to their health, and they do not want to see the privatization of health care in this province.

Perhaps the most disappointing has been the handling of the future of Ontarians who are on the autism spectrum. They're replacing a wait-list with a system where no family will find the support they need.

Today, hundreds and hundreds of families have gathered on the lawn of Queen's Park to fight this government's plan. You can hear them now. We will continue to fight shoulder to shoulder with them until this government does the right thing, goes back to the drawing board, and delivers a plan that serves the real needs of these incredible, devoted families and individuals.

When will this government take a hint? They have given over \$1 billion in cuts to the richest Ontarians while trying to balance a budget on the backs of those who need help the most. Speaker, we are going from bad to worse.

CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: This past weekend, 32 individuals from across the region gathered to sign the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to remind the government of the fundamental rights and freedoms afforded to us as Canadians, such as freedom of association and legal freedoms.

Today, as I present this signed copy of the charter to the Premier, I urge this government to listen to the people of this province. In case the government needs a reminder, subsection 2(d) guarantees freedom of association. Collective bargaining promotes inclusive participation by strengthening weak voices and protecting workers from exploitation. Unions play a key role in improving occupational health and safety outcomes for workers across the province. Schedule 9 of Bill 66 removes the very bargaining rights and collective agreements that lie at the heart of freedom of association, to the detriment of this province's workers and people.

The charter also protects the legal freedoms of Canadians and shields us from living in a police state. We should be absolutely alarmed that Premier Ford has been treating the police force like his own personal security

system. The separation of police and state is necessary for democracy. Friends of Ford are not above the law. Perhaps the Premier would like this copy of the charter for his own collection. Thank you, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. I remind members that it's inappropriate to use props in the chamber when they're making a presentation.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Tomorrow, March 8, is International Women's Day, a day to celebrate and reflect upon the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women not only here in Ontario but around the world. I know our minister responsible for the status of women, who has been doing a phenomenal job advocating for women and women's issues, will be making some remarks later, so I want to focus on how my riding of Mississauga–Streetsville and Mississauga as a whole are recognizing this important day.

Our mayor, Bonnie Crombie, and council will be hosting a women's empowerment breakfast with female high school students—our leaders of tomorrow—to share our experiences and discuss how we can take action to motivate society to adopt a gender-balanced world.

The Mississauga Living Arts Centre will be hosting a panel of women in politics, where I will be joined by my colleague from Mississauga Centre; our mayor, Bonnie Crombie; our former mayor, Hazel McCallion; and other female leaders to talk about women in politics.

Throughout the weekend, so many community, cultural, arts and charitable groups are recognizing women within their organizations.

I am proud of how far women have come not only in politics but all sectors, and I'm very proud to serve in a government so committed to advancing the status of women.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. John Vanthof: This morning in question period, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines mentioned my remarks while answering a question about reducing regulations in the mining sector. Minister Rickford stated, "The ... member for Timiskaming–Cochrane apparently said this week that the problem isn't regulations. He should tell Vale that."

I am confident that many of the shareholders of Vale now wish that Brazil had as strong a regulatory and enforcement regime as Ontario. I know that the families who lost loved ones in the tailings dam collapse do. Strong regulations not only protect the environment and local residents but they protect companies and their shareholders.

Timiskaming–Cochrane has a strong mining sector. The problem that stakeholders constantly bring to my attention is not the amount of regulation but rather the uncertainty of the permitting process and the length of time that it takes to get multiple permits for a new project.

There are jurisdictions in Canada that have stronger regs than Ontario, but permitting takes one third of the time. In a market that competes for investors worldwide, that is the major roadblock. Getting rid of regulation might actually make getting projects in the ground harder, because investors and stakeholders may lose confidence in the province.

In the future, rather than making partisan attacks, I hope that the minister concentrates on the real issues facing Ontario's great mining sector.

CAFFEINE

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: This March marks the second annual Caffeine Awareness Month in North America. It's an opportunity to discuss one of the most heavily studied food ingredients in the world: caffeine.

I know many residents in my riding of Barrie–Innisfil reach for a caffeinated drink on a cold winter morning after digging out from a snowstorm. When it's roll-up-the-rim season, many people double up on their caffeine-loving habits.

Caffeine is one of the most widely consumed food and beverage ingredients around the world. It has been consumed for hundreds of years. Some 98% of Canadians consume caffeine from beverages such as coffee, tea, soft drinks and caffeinated energy drinks. Health Canada, among other leading global health authorities, has provided a daily suggested limit of 400 milligrams from all sources of caffeine.

It's important that consumers know what that means to their daily diets. Despite the wealth of research about caffeine, many myths still persist. Caffeine Awareness Month gives Canadians an opportunity to join in the conversation about caffeine to understand and answer questions like, "How much caffeine is in different types of beverages?" For example, a typical caffeinated energy drink has less than half that of the same-sized coffee house beverage.

I encourage all Canadians and Ontarians to get informed about their caffeine habits by visiting energydrinkinformation.ca. That way, next time they reach for a caffeinated beverage, they can make informed choices about one of the most widely consumed food and beverage ingredients in the world.

VOLUNTEERS

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Today, I'd like to talk about a critical element in life. I'm not going to suggest that these are not important; of course food is important, water is important and shelter is important. But there's another critical element that I do think is a part of our psychology, and thank goodness it's what we have such abundance of as a nation, as a province, as a community. That's volunteers.

I dare say not one member in this House would be here without volunteers, the countless people, the hundreds of people, sometimes thousands. They do an enormous

amount of legwork for us, whether they're knocking on a door, shuffling paper, making a phone call or out fundraising. They're giving us sound counsel and advice. They're absolutely critical.

They're certainly not relegated simply to politics. Quite frankly, that's a small part of the puzzle. Volunteers are actually so critical to our communities, whether it's for health—whether it's the cancer society, whether it is the chamber of commerce, whether it is the—

Interjection: Lions Club.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: —Lions Club. What else did I say?

Interjection: Rotary, Rotary.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: The Rotary Club. There are so many other ones. Actually, I was a member of a whole pile of clubs myself, and served as a volunteer for most of my life. Quite frankly, serving was one of the most educational and most beneficial things that I've ever done, Mr. Speaker.

I encourage every other Canadian to jump in, take advantage and be part of our communities.

MARTIN MAKAVEEV

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the member for Scarborough Southwest.

Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to take a moment to congratulate our page captain today, Martin Makaveev. I know I'm proud of you, and your parents, Peter Makaveev and Daniela Makaveeva, will be very proud of you as well. Thank you so much to Martin, who is from Scarborough Southwest.

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STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY JOURNÉE INTERNATIONALE DE LA FEMME

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Today I rise on behalf of International Women's Day as the minister responsible for women's issues.

As you're aware, tomorrow is international day of the woman, and it's my distinct honour to rise here as a legislator but also as the mother of a teenage daughter. I have a vested interest, as we all do, to ensure that future generations see a society without prejudice, one that holds endless possibilities for women and girls.

Thirteen years ago, I was elected to the Ontario Legislature as the youngest MPP at the time. My daughter, Victoria, was just an infant. I remember arriving at this Legislature and was shocked at the lack of support for female politicians with children and knew immediately that I had to set about change. Now, with the support of all parties, we have family-friendly sitting hours.

What I'm also proud of is that today, the little baby who once inspired change in this assembly and who learned to

walk in the hallways of this esteemed Legislature is now 13 years old and stood in this assembly last fall as a legislative page. However, I think it's important to know that this program was once exclusively all-male. No woman who serves in this place should have to choose between being a good mom and being a good MPP, and I'm so proud that all political parties responded to the efforts to make our Legislature more family-friendly.

I also want to take this opportunity to discuss where we are now, and the future ahead of us. Recent social movements such as #MeToo and #TimesUp show us that Canada and Ontario are not immune to the pervasive issue of sexual violence against women. There are 460,000 cases of sexual assault each year in Canada; 39% of Canadian women report having at least one experience of sexual assault since the age of 16; and in 2018, from January to August, 106 women and girls were killed in Canada, predominantly by men.

In October, I spoke to the Canadian Club about Ontario's dirty little secret. That's sex trafficking. Women and girls as young as 11 years old in our province are conditioned, coerced and then trafficked for profit. When women escape trafficking or when their trafficker is finished with them, they're often destitute, with no credit, broken and dealing with intense psychological challenges, and they're alone.

I'd like to take the time to recognize my colleague Minister Laurie Scott, who was the first to bring this horrifying practice to the assembly and to tell us about girls being trafficked throughout this province. She brought in groundbreaking legislation, the Saving the Girl Next Door Act.

As the minister responsible for women's issues, I intend to build on her strong work and that legacy. That is why I have appointed the member from Cambridge as well as the member from Mississauga Centre to lead consultations throughout our province to talk about sex trafficking at the local level. That will be augmented by an interministerial task table that I have set up with the Ministries of the Attorney General, Education, Health and Corrections, as well as the Ministry of Transportation. I'll take that information, as I co-chair a task force with the federal minister of women's issues, and I'm delighted to announce, Speaker, in this Legislature that on Sunday I will be leaving as part of the Canadian delegation to speak at the United Nations about this horrific practice. The fact is, we're not only still fighting for the equality of men and women; we are fighting for those women who have been dehumanized and have an eroded sense of rights in this province. In many cases, we're still fighting for these women to have basic freedoms, rights and safety.

It has been an honour to listen to and collaborate with community partners and local leaders who work to end violence against women. I've learned from front-line workers, the very people who work with women and girls with real lived experience, who provide vital services and supports. These individuals are central to finding solutions to stop violence, whether that is domestic in the home or whether that is a woman being trafficked by a pimp.

Violence against women is preventable, and it has lasting impacts on the well-being of women and girls.

But our government cannot and should not do that alone. We need our community partners to work with us in reviewing the programs and services that we provide. That's why our government is building on the current investment of \$174.5 million in funding for violence-against-women services. I've been proud to stand with my colleagues, my male colleagues the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Minister of Natural Resources, the government House leader, as well as the MPPs from Oakville and Milton, in touring their local violence-against-women shelters. I have often said it is important for strong women to support vulnerable women, but we also need strong men to support vulnerable women. That is why I'm so proud to be part of a government that is committed to ensuring that.

As I mentioned, I was happy to be in Brockville a few months ago to announce that we are investing \$1.5 million for rural front-line agencies to increase collaboration, strengthen service delivery, improve culturally relevant supports for Indigenous women and reduce geographic and transportation barriers. I was also pleased recently to be in Cobourg with another one of my male counterparts, the member from Cobourg, as we toured his violence-against-women shelters.

I'm telling you, Speaker, there is amazing work being done throughout this great province that we need to continually highlight in this Legislature. We must and we will create a more responsive system for women and girls who have experienced violence, and transform the societal attitudes, behaviours and norms that make women more vulnerable to violence.

I'm looking forward to being part of this work for a wider vision to create a safer Ontario. To all women and girls who have experienced violence, we are standing with you and we are standing behind you and we are standing up for you.

I also see a stronger, fairer Ontario that boasts GDP growth and innovation and ensures that there are more women taking part in these investments, an Ontario where women and girls can pursue any dream, any future—anything—without barriers in their way.

Women must be treated fairly and recognized for their valuable contributions to this province. Improving women's economic empowerment will support Ontario's continued growth and our prosperity.

Speaker, I want young girls to know that there are careers available in male-dominated fields like science, technology, engineering and math. Let me point out that the three largest departments in Premier Ford's government are led by women: our Deputy Premier and Health Minister, Christine Elliott; our Education Minister, Lisa Thompson; and, of course, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services that I lead.

I was at an artificial intelligence celebration and reception this morning. Women today are leaders in technology, in academia, in research, in all of those fields that are non-traditionally held. I want them to know that they can build

great careers and they can be innovators in the skilled trades as well. They can do whatever they put their minds to.

I'd like to touch on an important issue, and that has to do with leadership roles and mentorship. Young women need mentors to show them that they belong at the table. That's why I was involved two years ago in a groundbreaking initiative called Daughters of the Vote, which saw 338 young women sit in the House of Commons as if they were MPs themselves. It was the first time in the history of this country where every single seat in the House of Commons was occupied by a woman. There was a time when there were no women in the House. To see our nation's Legislature full exclusively of women was inspiring.

I was fortunate to meet promising young women there who have since then become members of my staff and members of staff across the political spectrum right here in the province of Ontario and in our nation's capital. Over the past few years, I've watched many of these young women grow. I expect them to be candidates in the future. I expect them to be parliamentarians in the future. With every bit of encouragement, women are more willing to take their seat at the table than they once were and I believe, as a result, they will thrive.

Of course, we must know that we also have to talk to our daughters, our wives, our sisters and nieces and reaffirm that they are capable and that anything is possible.

So when people ask me why International Women's Day is so important, it's because changing attitudes is important, because teaching the next generation of female leaders that complacency that we were taught does irreparable harm, and because curtailing ambition never has been or never will be in any woman's or girl's best interests.

I must underscore that our country and our province have come a very long way. I'm reminded of this every day from a postcard from 1911 that sits in my office. The postcard features women and girls sitting outside Queen's Park. What I find most striking is that the women in the picture were not yet considered persons. They could not vote. They were ineligible to take their seat in the Legislative Assembly at the time. This was a place filled completely with men. I look at that photo from time to time—and Speaker, I may have even provided a copy of that postcard to you.

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I think at the time they looked almost powerless, and it wasn't until October 19, 1929, 18 years after that picture was taken on the postcard, that women were considered persons under the law and were given the right to vote. The Famous Five, whom we all know, are commemorated each year on Persons Day.

But I'm also very proud that the new \$10 bill features a Nova Scotia civil rights leader from my hometown of New Glasgow, Nova Scotia: Viola Desmond. She's the perfect example of a woman from history who widened the trail. It was her intersection with history in segregationist Nova Scotia in 1946 that ended up putting her on the \$10 bill. I

could think of no greater underdog, Speaker, than a teenage woman from Atlantic Canada who was Black to change the course of history in this country. She was the leader of civil rights in North America. She was Rosa Parks before there was a Rosa Parks. Like Viola Desmond, we must also remember that not all women in Canada were considered equal at the time and it took many more years for our Indigenous sisters to gain the right to vote and be persons.

I'm often reminded of a comment that my colleague from Oshawa in the NDP once said in this House. Many of us have been able to follow the path of the trailblazers, but for all of us in this Legislature today, our job might not be to blaze that trail, but it is our job to widen that trail. It's important for us to consider the many women in our communities who have not had the same privileges as many of us in this House. When we look at gender equality, we must remember the girl next door who could be trafficked, the mother and her young children who may be escaping violence, or those in this city and across the province who may be living in poverty.

Today and every day, I ask you to help move this cause forward, help create partnerships in your individual communities, and help more women and girls participate fully in social, economic and political fabrics of what makes Ontario so great, because when we support women in politics, women in business, women in leadership and women in sectors traditionally not meant for women and where they are underrepresented, we are supporting our communities, we are supporting our education system, we are supporting our economy and we are helping to build an even stronger and more prosperous Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Responses?

Ms. Suze Morrison: It is a privilege to speak today on behalf of my caucus in honour of International Women's Day. I am so immensely proud to say that I am part of a caucus with gender parity. Make no mistake, Speaker: This gender parity did not come about by accident. We know that women are more reticent to enter politics. We worry that we're underqualified or inexperienced. I'm sure most of the women in this chamber can relate to being our own worst critics and often surprising ourselves with our own success.

The gender parity in our caucus is a result of an intentional, concerted effort to actively recruit women, to mentor them and to make sure that women see themselves reflected in their elected representatives. Indigenous women, single moms, racialized and Black women, queer women, trans women, women who have lived experiences of poverty and who live with disabilities—all of these women deserve to see themselves reflected in the makeup of this Legislature and every electoral body across this country. We know that we can do better for these women; we know that we must.

Speaker, I also know that this government is not doing right by women. They've slashed the Basic Income Pilot. They have cut planned social assistance increases. They have cancelled the expert round table on ending violence against women. They've eliminated rent control for new

buildings. This government took away personal leave days and permitted employers to demand sick notes, which disproportionately affects women, who continue to bear the vast majority of this province's caregiving responsibilities. They've cut the promised 33% funding increase to rape crisis centres, funding that's desperately needed for survivors who are waiting up to 18 months for the counselling services they need. They froze the minimum wage, which disproportionately disadvantages women, who represent the largest share of our province's minimum-wage earners. Based on the most recent data from Statistics Canada, women still earn 71 cents on the dollar compared to their male colleagues. A woman who works full-time still earns 22.6% less than her male counterpart.

Yet somehow, astonishingly, this government has iced the Pay Transparency Act, a piece of legislation that would have required all publicly advertised job postings to include a salary range, and that large employers track the salary gap of their employees. It also would have barred employers from asking about past compensation and prohibited reprisal of employees who discuss their compensation.

This government seems to believe that pay equity for women is nothing more than red tape, that fairness for women is somehow bad for business. Just a few days ago, we learned that this government is proceeding with surveys to large businesses asking them how much it would cost to collect and report on the unfair wages that they are paying women.

While this government consults with their wealthy friends and donors, women are shouldering the cost of their inaction on wage inequality. That, Speaker, is why I will not stop fighting for the change that Ontario women deserve. I will continue to bring their stories into this chamber. I will continue to mentor women and to promote the success of all women in our communities.

My message to Ontario women is to not give up. This government may be determined to drag you backwards and they may be determined to trample your rights and to underfund the services that you need, but for generations, women have fiercely led and won our battles with hope and optimism in our hearts.

The women who have come before us have won significant victories on our behalf. They paved the way for me to be able to stand in this chamber today, but this government's constant attacks on women's rights are a reminder that those victories must be defended and that we have to keep fighting to protect every inch of progress that we have made.

All 40 members of our official opposition are listening to you, and we are right there fighting on the front lines with you. When we organize, when we use our stories and when we stand together, we will bring about the kind of change that makes people's lives better.

Thank you so much, and bonne journée de la femme.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Responses?

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I am honoured to rise today to speak on behalf of International Women's Day and to

represent my Liberal caucus, where women are the majority in our caucus. It does make a difference having that voice, that strong female voice at the table, and also, as a party where we saw Ontario elect the first female Premier in its history under the leadership of Kathleen Wynne.

One year ago, on March 6, 2018, Ontario became the first province to tackle pay transparency as part of a broad new strategy to advance women's economic empowerment and build fairer, better workplaces. Today, as we celebrate International Women's Day, we owe it to all of the women and girls in Ontario and to future generations to advance gender equality in this province. This year's theme, "Think equal, build smart, innovate for change," is a global call to action. It is therefore our duty as elected officials to advance gender equality and champion the rights of women and girls in this province.

I am committed to supporting women and girls in a number of key areas and to creating an Ontario that is safe, just and respectful for everyone. By building support for women's rights and participation across all levels of society, we owe it to our daughters and our future daughters to act, just like the ancestors that acted for us over 100 years ago.

Today in Canada, women earn about 71 cents for every dollar that men earn. Here in Ontario, women continue to face discrimination or unconscious bias in hiring, promotion, and compensation practices. This requires a transformative shift and bold action. On a day like today, the eve of International Women's Day, we cannot forget that 54% of employers have gender pay gaps contrary to the Pay Equity Act. On a day like today, we have a duty to ensure that female earners across this province are supported and listened to.

1340

Speaker, I have been listening. I hear the voices loud and clear. The time for pay transparency is now. The Pay Transparency Act was passed in April 2018 and was scheduled to come into force on January 1, 2019. What happened? Well, under Conservative Bill 57 this will not happen. Why is that?

As a woman, I cannot sit idly by and wait while this government places women's issues on the back burner. Women in this province need more information when negotiating compensation. The Pay Transparency Act will not only provide women with economic security, but it will also improve women's lifetime earnings and their earnings potential. Many groups, like the Equal Pay Coalition, have fought for many years for equal pay for equal work, and the fight continues: equal pay for equal work.

Three years ago, on International Women's Day, Ontario pledged to end sexual violence and harassment by releasing its three-year, \$41-million action plan to stop sexual violence and harassment, entitled It's Never Okay. You might remember the award-winning promotion that went with that. Our last budget committed \$4 million to the 42 sexual assault centres across this province, because it is needed: 176 people are on the wait-list at the Waterloo

region sexual assault centre while this funding is being slashed. This government has reduced this \$4-million commitment to just \$1 million. The Toronto Rape Crisis Centre says that funding from this province falls well short.

Today, we must not only recognize the barriers that women face, but we must also celebrate their achievements—the achievements of women who have overcome these barriers. I'm very glad that the minister mentioned Viola Desmond and the fact that she stood on principle. A law that was in place was a wrong law and needed to be changed. Today, she graces our \$10 bill.

Let's build a gender-balanced world. We need to reduce poverty among women, broaden gender diversity in positions of leadership and work together to ensure that no woman is left behind. There should be no limits to what any young girl or woman can do with her life. Empowering women and girls moves us all forward.

Happy International Women's Day.

PETITIONS

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Sara Singh: I'd like to present this petition entitled "Support Ontario Families with Autism."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas every child with autism deserves access to sufficient treatment and support so that they can live to their fullest potential;

"Whereas the Ontario Autism Program was badly broken under the Liberals, and the changes introduced by the Conservatives have made it worse;

"Whereas the new funding caps are based on age and income, and not the clinical needs of the child;

"Whereas Ontario needs a true investment in evidence-based autism services that meets the needs of autistic children and their families;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to invest in equitable, needs-based autism services for all children who need them."

I'd like to thank Amita Patel from my riding for this petition. I proudly affix my name and send it off with page Cameron.

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Mike Harris: In honour of the fur harvesters, who had their annual convention in North Bay over the weekend, I'm proud to introduce this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the ban on hunting and trapping in sections of Ontario to protect the eastern hybrid wolf was put in place without regard for the overall ecosystem;

"Whereas this ban has adversely affected the ability of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR),

hunters and trappers to properly manage animal populations and Ontario's ecosystem;

"Whereas this ban is no longer needed and is in fact causing more damage to Ontario's ecosystem and increasing unnecessary encounters between wildlife and Ontarians;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry immediately lift the ban on hunting and trapping set in place to protect the eastern hybrid wolf."

I fully support this petition. I have already affixed my signature and I present it to page Pieter to bring to the table.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I'd like to thank my constituents of Parkdale–High Park for signing this petition. It's titled "Support Ontario Families with Autism."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas every child with autism deserves access to sufficient treatment and support so that they can live to their fullest potential;

"Whereas the Ontario Autism Program was badly broken under the Liberals, and the changes introduced by the Conservatives have made it worse;

"Whereas the new funding caps are based on age and income, and not the clinical needs of the child;

"Whereas Ontario needs a true investment in evidence-based autism services that meets the needs of autistic children and their families;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to invest in equitable, needs-based autism services for all children who need them."

I couldn't agree with them more and I will be supporting this petition by affixing my signature to it.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I have 2,500 signatures on a petition which talks about my private member's bill.

"Whereas certain commercial operations known as 'puppy/kitten mills' have been reported to keep animals in precarious conditions in breach of provincial animal welfare laws; and

"Whereas dog/cat breeding in accordance with the law is a legitimate economic activity; and

"Whereas it is the duty of any government to ensure the laws of Canada and Ontario are respected and that the health and well-being of innocent animals [are] protected;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services work proactively with all amateur and professional dog/cat breeders, as well as consumers, with the intent to tackle confirmed animal cruelty cases in

puppy/kitten mills and to educate all stakeholders about animal welfare standards.”

I have already affixed my signature to these petitions and I will hand them to page Ahmad.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I would like to thank residents of York South–Weston, my constituents, for signing this petition.

“Don’t Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.

“Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

“Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

“Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

“Make it illegal to pay part-time, temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;

“Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario’s consumer price index;

“Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;

“Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

“Provide strong enforcement through the hiring of an additional 175 employment standards officers;

“Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours, including:

“—three hours’ pay when workers are expected to be on call all day, but are not called into work;

“—three hours’ pay for any employee whose shift is cancelled with less than two days’ notice; and

“—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days’ notice;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection.”

I fully support this petition. I will be affixing my name to it and providing it to page Collin to deliver to the table.

1350

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and I’d like to thank a number of the people in the galleries today who collected these signatures.

“Whereas the Paris Galt moraine performs critical ecological and hydrological functions that are vital for the well-being of our environment and communities;

“Whereas the moraine provides habitat for wildlife, maintains wetlands, streams and rivers, and filters and stores drinking water;

“Whereas the city of Guelph is the largest city in Canada to rely almost exclusively on groundwater for their drinking water and the moraine is an essential water recharge area in the Grand River watershed;

“Whereas the moraines in the area provide drinking water for close to 200,000 people and the surrounding population is expected to grow by one million people by 2041;

“Whereas protecting the moraine is the fiscally responsible option to ensure the availability of clean drinking water and finding other means of providing water would be extremely expensive;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to protect the ecological and hydrological integrity of the Paris Galt moraine.”

I fully support this petition, will be signing it and asking page Daniel to bring it to the table.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas all levels of government should recognize that Ontario has an aging population and ought to encourage innovative and affordable solutions for seniors housing; and

“Whereas local municipalities should not deter seniors from choosing affordable housing options; and

“Whereas the Legislative Assembly of Ontario should recognize that unrelated seniors living together can reap significant health, economic and social benefits;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Support the Golden Girls Act, 2019, and continue to push for bold, innovative and cost-effective solutions to the affordable housing crisis for seniors.”

Of course, I support this, affix my signature and give it to page Cameron.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: I have hundreds of signatures here from my constituents in Beaches–East York for a petition entitled, “Address Animal Welfare in Ontario.

“Whereas all animals in Ontario deserve our protection but are largely going unprotected at this time;

“Whereas the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) is the only agency in Ontario authorized to enforce animal protection laws but now provides local service to only about half the province;

“Whereas the OSPCA has continually cut back services, including their recent decision to stop investigating

incidents involving farm animals and horses, as well as failing to fully investigate poorly run zoos, dog-fighting operations, puppy and kitten mills, and even documented cases of dogs being tortured in the city of Toronto;

“Whereas the OSPCA has made itself completely unaccountable to the public by eliminating annual general members meetings and board elections as well as eliminating a government representative from their board meetings;

“Whereas the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services provides an annual grant to the OSPCA of \$5.75 million of the public’s dollars, for which the OSPCA is supposed to provide province-wide coverage and other services which the OSPCA has failed to deliver;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, through the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, which administers the OSPCA Act and its funding agreement with the OSPCA, as follows:

“Exercise the government’s current authority under the OSPCA Act to annul the bylaws of the OSPCA and restore accountability to that organization by requiring a new bylaw that re-establishes annual general members meetings, open board elections and a government representative at board meetings;

“As permitted in the current funding agreement, immediately suspend funding to the OSPCA and conduct a forensic audit of that organization’s use of public funds;

“Recognize that the important job of animal protection should no longer be entrusted to an unaccountable charity, and create a new system that ensures immediate and long-term protection for the millions of animals who live among us.”

I’m happy to sign this petition and to give it to page Shumyle to take to the Clerk.

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Deepak Anand: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the ban on hunting and trapping in sections of Ontario to protect the eastern hybrid wolf was put in place without regard for the overall ecosystem;

“Whereas this ban has adversely affected the ability of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), hunters and trappers to properly manage animal populations and Ontario’s ecosystem;

“Whereas this ban is no longer needed and is in fact causing more damage to Ontario’s ecosystem and increasing unnecessary encounters between wildlife and Ontarians;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry immediately lift the ban on hunting and trapping set in place to protect the eastern hybrid wolf.”

Madam Speaker, I’m happy to sign and give it to page Adam.

MIDWIFERY

Ms. Catherine Fife: In honour of International Women’s Day, I am pleased to present this petition. Ontario needs pay equity for midwives. Signatures are from Blue Heron Midwives in Waterloo.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas midwives provide expert, women-centred care before, during and six weeks following birth; and

“Whereas midwifery is a female-dominated profession, with women comprising over 99% of the field; and

“Whereas midwives have been providing cost-effective care since 1994, despite not receiving a pay increase until 2005; and

“Whereas a 2016 report found that the health care industry in Ontario has a 37% gender wage gap, contributing to this provincially systemic issue; and

“Whereas the final report and recommendations of the Gender Wage Gap Strategy Steering Committee recommend, ‘the government should consult with relevant workplace parties on how to value work in female-dominant sectors using pay equity or other means’;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to work with the Association of Ontario Midwives to reinstate a pay equity lens for the profession of midwifery, and compensate midwives appropriately for the expert, women-centred, continuum of care that they provide to pre- and post-natal mothers and infants.”

I fully support this petition and will affix my signature and give it to page Sophie.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: My petition is entitled “Support Ontario Families with Autism.”

“Whereas every child” on the autism spectrum “deserves access to sufficient treatment and support so that they can live to their fullest potential;

“Whereas the Ontario Autism Program was badly broken under the Liberals, and the changes introduced by the Conservatives have made it worse;

“Whereas the new funding caps are based on age and income, and not the clinical needs of the child;

“Whereas Ontario needs a true investment in evidence-based autism services that meets the needs of autistic children and their families;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to invest in equitable, needs-based autism services for all children who need them.”

I certainly support this petition. I will be affixing my signature and giving it to page Siya.

INJURED WORKERS

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled “Workers’ Comp is a Right.”

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas about 200,000 to 300,000 people in Ontario are injured on the job every year;

“Whereas over a century ago, workers in Ontario who were injured on the job gave up the right to sue their employers, in exchange for a system that would provide them with just compensation;

“Whereas decades of cost-cutting have pushed injured workers into poverty and onto publicly funded social assistance programs, and have gradually curtailed the rights of injured workers;

“Whereas injured workers have the right to quality and timely medical care, compensation for lost wages, and protection from discrimination;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to change the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to accomplish the following for injured workers in Ontario:

“Eliminate the practice of ‘deeming’ or ‘determining,’ which bases compensation on phantom jobs that injured workers do not actually have;

“Ensure that the WSIB prioritizes and respects the medical opinions of the health care providers who treat the injured worker directly;

“Prevent compensation from being reduced or denied based on ‘pre-existing conditions’ that never affected the worker’s ability to function prior to the work injury.”

I fully support this petition and will be affixing my signature to it and sending it with page Anika. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The time for petitions has expired.

REQUEST TO THE INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table a request by the member for Don Valley East to the Honourable J. David Wake, Integrity Commissioner, for an opinion pursuant to section 30 of the Members’ Integrity Act, 1994, on whether the member for Nepean, Lisa MacLeod, has contravened the act or Ontario parliamentary convention.

1400

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

PROTECTING OUR PETS ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LA PROTECTION DE NOS ANIMAUX DE COMPAGNIE

Ms. Hogarth moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act to establish the Companion Animal Wellness Review Committee / Projet de loi 65, Loi constituant le Comité d’examen du bien-être des animaux de compagnie.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Bonjour and good afternoon. I am so pleased to rise to debate Bill 65, my first private member’s bill, An Act to establish the Companion Animal Wellness Review Committee or, for short, Protecting Our Pets Act.

I want to start by acknowledging the support in the galleries this afternoon for this legislation, and a special shout-out to my legislative assistant, Stephen Warner, for all his help in getting us here today. Thank you all for your hard work.

I also want to acknowledge my colleague from Thornhill, Gila Martow, who has been so supportive and helpful in getting me to this point. It is so wonderful to be part of a team, and I certainly appreciate your support.

I also want to shout out to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and MPP from Dufferin–Caledon for her support and guidance to get me to this point as well. Thank you very much. It’s great to be part of this team.

In the gallery today are representatives from a number of organizations as well as individuals who are concerned about animal wellness. I’m sure if I tried to list every single person who has talked to me or written me a letter, I would certainly miss some. So it’s best to highlight some of the groups that are here today.

As I mentioned during introductions, we have quite a few members here from my riding, including those from the Etobicoke Humane Society. Also in attendance are members from the Association of Animal Shelter Administrators of Ontario, who joined me for the press conference this morning. Members of the Canadian Kennel Club are also here. And we have a number of rescue organizations, boarders and groomers attending this afternoon as well.

Speaker, I’ve had a number of incredibly productive conversations about this bill and about animal wellness generally from many of the people here this afternoon and others. I’d be remiss if I didn’t thank all of those people who are watching on TV and those here today for their feedback and guidance. I appreciate your passion to help make this legislation a reality.

My own history with rescue animals goes back a number of years. Growing up, my family always had a humane society dog as part of our family. In 2010, when my sister moved into her home, she found a family of feral kittens living in her backyard. After they were all spayed and neutered, we saw these cats and we all took one in. So we all have a family of these cats.

At that point, I didn’t realize what these cats would bring to my life. I’ll tell you, my girl, whose name is Edward—when I had her, I thought she was going to be a boy, and then she ended up being a girl. She’s still Edward. She is the most amazing cat ever. She was a feral cat, and they say that you can’t keep them or they can’t be living in your home. Well, this one we found early enough that she sure does, and she still has all her claws and doesn’t destroy anything.

Two years ago, my friend Louise, who worked for Tiny Paws rescue, introduced me to Bruce. Bruce is a poor little dog with so many health problems. He was given up for adoption and needed a home, but he needed a home where someone was willing to give him ongoing medical treatment. We call him our little money pit, but he is also part of our family.

One thing: When you have rescue companies or breeders—good breeders—what they will do is they will interview you. They don't just give their dogs or cats away. They want to make sure that those animals find their forever home, because they don't want the animals to go back and forth. After an interview and a family visit, we passed. It was a great fit, and Bruce is now part of our lives. Yesterday was his birthday; he is now six. Or 42, as my husband says.

That brings us to the bill at hand. It's important to note the context in which this bill comes forward. Some members, I'm sure, and many of the guests here are aware of some of the ongoing conversations happening around the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act as well as the OSPCA itself. I will leave discussions of that before the courts to the dedicated people over at the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. However, I think it's important to remember the place that private members' legislation plays in the policy process.

Private members' bills will never solve all the problems in a particular policy area, and this bill won't fix the complicated situation facing animal wellness in Ontario. Instead, private members' bills play an important role in bringing policy issues to the forefront of debate. But now, more than ever, animal wellness needs to be on the forefront of the debate, because we have an opportunity to move the needle even just a little on improving protections for vulnerable pets. And that's exactly what Bill 65 does.

This bill, if passed, would require the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to establish an advisory committee called the Companion Animal Wellness Review Committee to inquire into, and report on, quality of care provided to companion animals—cats and dogs—by people who keep them for the purpose of breeding, exhibition, entertainment, boarding, hire or sale.

Si adopté, le projet de loi obligerait la ministre de la Sécurité communautaire à créer un comité sur le bien-être des animaux de compagnie.

Specifically, the committee would be required to report back after eight months on its recommendations regarding a few topics, including an educational campaign targeted at potential pet buyers to make them aware of the dangers of buying from someone who has neglected, harmed or otherwise put the animal in distress. You may have heard the term “puppy mills.” It would also require the committee to report on potential changes to restrict the operations of those who contravene the OSPCA Act, and potential standards of care that should apply to companion animals being kept in the care of certain professionals.

The committee would be required to include representatives from a cross-section of those in the animal wellness

sector. It would also include people who keep pets for certain professional purposes, including breeding, exhibition, entertainment, boarding, hire or sale. It would include people such as veterinarians, who provide care to pets; it would include representatives of animal shelters, who keep rescue pets safe; and it would include people who have and care for pets.

Let me be clear: The goal of this bill is to target those who abuse or neglect cats and dogs. Oftentimes, we call these kinds of abusive situations “puppy mills,” or we have also heard the term “backyard breeder.” They often produce high volumes—or sometimes even low volumes of pets, but they are in the most inhumane and filthy circumstances possible. Their most basic needs are neglected, such as proper veterinary care, affection and exercise. They are often left in tiny, filthy cages for extended periods of time.

Nobody will dispute the fact that the vast majority of those who breed and work with pets do so responsibly, safely and humanely. The people here in the galleries from the Canadian Kennel Club are a fine example of that, but the reality is that despite our best efforts, there are still those who knowingly put future pets in horrendous environments. Often, these puppies have degenerative diseases and are sold to unknowing and unprepared families.

Speaker, our pets have no political stripe, and there is a need for all of us to stand up and protect them. In that spirit, I want to close by highlighting a cross-section of support I have received for this bill.

The Ontario Veterinary Medical Association has this to say in support of the Protecting Our Pets Act:

“Animal welfare issues are important, not only to animal lovers, but to the general public. As a strong advocate for animal health and welfare, OVMA recognizes that a lack of standards for companion animals being bred or raised for sale is problematic and can lead to cats and dogs being kept in substandard conditions. Establishing a clear definition of a puppy or kitten mill is not a straightforward task. Bringing together key stakeholders who can bring clarity to such issues is an important first step to eliminating substandard companion animal breeding operations in Ontario.

“OVMA would like to thank you for recognizing the importance of this issue and for introducing this bill to begin the process of working toward responsible pet breeding standards.”

1410

The Association of Animal Shelter Administrators of Ontario has this to say: “The Association of Animal Shelter Administrators of Ontario is very interested in the issues raised in the Protecting Our Pets Act. We hope that this bill, if implemented, can mark the end of abuse towards Ontario's vulnerable pets.”

I'll say it again, Speaker: Our pets have no political stripe. Today, we need to take the next step towards ending animal cruelty and starting the conversation to put an end to puppy and kitten mills. I believe that one act of cruelty against a cat or a dog is one too many. As a society, we can do much better.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: It is an absolutely fabulous day when I get to stand up in the Legislature at Queen's Park and talk about my dogs. I have two. Their names are Elliot and Kuma and they are each 100 pounds. They are Bouviers. They come from a Canadian Kennel Club breeder who interviewed us when we went to see if we were going to be lucky enough to take them home. The younger one tends to be a little shy. Because of that, he has been bullied by other dogs. The breeder looked at us and said, "We know that you're going to be a good pet owner for Kuma, and you're going to be able to deal with his nervousness in such a way that it's going to be good for him." It matters because, in the absence of somebody who was willing to work with him, because he has been bullied by other dogs and it has made him barky and loud, he could have been one of those dogs who ended up being passed on and ended up being chained to a fence somewhere. So I get this issue really deeply.

I've had a lifetime of dogs—and, a little while ago, a rescue cat. He was a Maine Coon cat who had belonged to a breeder who stopped taking care of her animals. Eventually her fellow breeders staged an intervention, and they went in and got out these cats. When we met Henry, he was terrified and he was hiding. It took months and months of care to get him to come out of his shell.

The other point that I want to make is that I come from Beaches–East York, which is maybe the doggiest part of Ontario. People come there because of its wonderful off-leash beaches because of how much love there is for animals. I sense that absolutely every time I take my dogs out.

I want to thank my colleague across the aisle for bringing this bill forward. You're absolutely right: Pets have no political stripe, and they deserve to be protected and cared for. As legislators, it's our job to ensure that that happens.

If there is an afterlife, I think there must be a special place of wretchedness for people who have abused innocent animals during their lives.

Thank you so much for this bill. It will be my pleasure to support it.

There are a couple of points that I'd like to make. It doesn't mean anything, unfortunately, unless we get the regulation piece right. The minister is listening, and I'm really pleased about that. I know that the minister will be aware of this. Obviously, it's beyond the scope of this bill to fix that part. But I think it's incumbent upon us as legislators to ensure that we do get that part right, that we do fix whatever is going on with the OSPCA, and we do find a way, whether it's fixing that organization or creating a new system, where our animals—whether they are animals on farms or wild animals, for that matter, or whether they are companion animals—are cared for, and that people who don't take that seriously are taken to task in an appropriate way. So I think that if that requires an investment, then that is going to require an investment. But we can't allow a situation to continue where animals are abused. It's just unforgivable.

The other point that I want to make, and it's a slightly different point, but I wish the bill made room to get rid of breed-specific legislation, which exists in Ontario at the moment. When I was nominated just over a year ago in Beaches–East York, it was one of the first things that people in my riding came to me to say. "Please, please, if you get to Queen's Park, please put forward a private member's bill to get rid of BSL." Every study that has been done is clear: There are no bad breeds. That just doesn't make any sense. There are bad owners, there are bad breeders, but there are no bad breeds.

I think we really need to follow the lead of Quebec and get rid of BSL. It's a really problematic piece of legislation that actually has an effect on the way we think about people, as well. I'm going to make an argument that it is akin to—it pushes and promotes racism thinking, because if you have breeds of animals that are inherently bad, it promotes the idea that you can have certain races of people that are inherently problematic. And that is such a deeply problematic idea and wrong idea, whether we're talking about people or whether we're talking about animals. I just think we have to eradicate it entirely from the way we think and act.

So just some things to think about. I will be happy and proud to support your bill, and thank you so much for bringing it forward.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: Thank you to the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore. You actually reminded me. I have a dog as well. She is a 12-year-old Cardigan Welsh Corgi. Her name is Julie. I got her from a CKC-registered, reputable breeder, Yasashiikuma in Dundalk, which is in, actually, the minister of correction's—oh no.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Just north.

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: Just north of her riding, actually.

It is my pleasure to rise today and speak to and support Bill 65, the companion animal wellness review act. I want to thank my colleague again, the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, for bringing attention to the sad reality of animal cruelty with her bill, and specifically the need to address puppy and kitten mills in Ontario, where basic needs—as she mentioned—like proper veterinary care, affection and exercise are often ignored, or ignored altogether, and where animals are often left to languish in cages. This is unacceptable.

I believe that all Ontarians can support the companion animal wellness review act, and indeed, I hope all members in this House will too. Pets in our province deserve humane and safe treatment. Pet owners and the public deserve to know the dangers to pets that come from breeders who are inhumane and unsafe in their practices.

Imagine being a shelter worker or volunteer, someone who wants to see dogs and cats taken care of and loved by responsible and caring people, but knowing how hard it can be, how difficult it can be to work with and find homes for certain animals because of their bad temperaments as a result of careless breeding and irresponsible owners.

Animal rescues, humane societies and shelters across Ontario are sometimes inundated with dogs and cats from irresponsible breeders who, quite frankly, don't care for the animals properly or who sell them with little to no regard or awareness for who is actually buying the animal. This is a sad reality that we can change. The companion animal wellness review act will help make these things better.

I'm happy to support Bill 65 and the creation of an advisory committee, which would report to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and help make Ontario a safer place for our pets and put a stop to puppy and kitten mills. The Companion Animal Wellness Review Committee, under this proposed bill, would be made up of pet owners, safe and reputable breeders, veterinarians, as well as representatives of the Ontario SPCA and animal shelters, among others. The committee's report would advise the minister on the standard of care that should apply to the treatment of pets, and would recommend changes to legislation and regulations in order to restrict the operation of pet breeders who violate the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

I am encouraged this report from the committee would also look at establishing an educational awareness campaign aimed at would-be and current Ontario pet owners to advise them of the dangers to animals that come from a breeder or seller that has neglected them. Similarly, the report would look at an awareness and educational campaign aimed around the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act to explain the importance of the act, and just what it means to violate it.

As both members have said, pets are not partisan and this isn't about politics.

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Speaker, the Companion Animal Wellness Review Committee stands up for pets and responsible pet owners. This legislation is about listening to Ontario Humane Society workers, volunteers, reputable breeders and people who care for and about dogs and cats across Ontario. It is the right thing to do.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to join the debate today. I thank the member from Etobicoke-Lakeshore for bringing forward this motion. It will prompt a very timely debate in the province, a much larger debate, I think, about how we are ensuring that animals in this province are kept safe and that they are well cared for.

What's really interesting is that the act sets this advisory committee to set certain parts of legislation into action. That will give an opportunity for many voices to come to the table. I think that we will be surprised, genuinely so, at how many people will come to this debate, because the welfare of animals in the province of Ontario does connect a lot of us. It's definitely a non-partisan issue.

But there are some gaps that I do want to bring to the attention of the member so that, going forward, we can

ensure that if we're going to build something, we build it right and that we do it the right way the first time.

In 2017 alone, over 1,200 cats and dogs were removed from harmful environments by the OSPCA, and over 500 provincial charges were laid in relation to cruelty towards animals. Something we don't talk a lot about is this connection, that when that oversight happens around protecting pets and animals, especially around neglect, that actually gives us a window into possible domestic violence. This is how eyes get into some of those situations and action follows through. As has already been pointed out, if people are willing to be harmful and violent towards animals, they often also are in the same situation with their spouse and their children. We're talking about animals and the welfare of animals, but we're actually talking about society as a whole, I have to say.

Animals kept in puppy mills are neglected. They're put in unsafe, cruel and unsanitary conditions without adequate veterinary care, food, water or socialization.

Anybody who is aware of this situation and has the opportunity to do something about it—I think it is incumbent on us to actually take action. So I'm hoping that this advisory committee leads to a greater protective oversight mechanism, which this province does need.

We are supportive of this motion; I do want to let the member know about this. But what the member from Beaches also mentioned is that the government needs to address the issue of breed-specific legislation. There is no reason why pit bulls should be banned in Ontario. It is discriminatory and it is wrong.

The former member from Parkdale-High Park, Cheri DiNovo, tabled a bill to end breed-specific legislation. It was defeated in this House. We have to overcome some of the stereotypes of certain breeds. As the member has pointed out, it speaks to the quality of the owner and many issues. In order to ensure that Ontario is a safe place for all kinds of pets, I urge this government to look into this discriminatory practice.

One thing that I want to reach out across the aisle to this member on—and I did sign your petition at the East Village Animal Hospital in K-W. I've already approached the minister of consumer affairs to deal with an issue where I think we can be focused on improving access to veterinary care for all animals, and this includes low-income people in the province of Ontario. So even as we ensure that dogs and cats are bred humanely, they still need to be properly taken care of by front-line veterinarians, which is something not everyone can afford. This is a real issue, especially in a province where we see growing inequality.

In Waterloo region, the East Village Animal Hospital offers low-cost vet services for pets being cared for by low-income individuals and non-profit animal rescue groups. They do a lot of work around feral cats. We need feral cats, actually, in society. They perform some important tasks, but they need to be spayed and neutered.

East Village is seeking charitable status. If they get charitable status, they can open their doors for more low-income pet owners, including seniors, including those who

should have the benefit of having a pet, because this is something that we know helps with mental health across the province.

There is a solution that will not financially impact the province. It's just the right thing to do. And there's no red tape, even, included in that, Madam Speaker.

The one last thing, too, is that I feel we do need to address and amend the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act to prohibit the cosmetic altering of animals. Many of you may not know this, but Ontario is the only remaining province that has not prohibited the cosmetic altering of animals, namely tail-docking, ear-cropping and declawing. Newfoundland just went through this process, so we don't have to reinvent the wheel here. We can follow Newfoundland, and whoever thought we would be saying that in the province of Ontario? Let's follow Newfoundland's lead.

So there are some solutions: improving charitable status for animal hospitals; addressing and being pre-emptive on some of the issues that all breeds are facing; and ending the discriminatory practice of breed-specific issues.

But there is a disconnect with that petition that we heard prior to this, concerning fur harvesters and the trapping of wolves. I think that is unfortunate. It's unfortunate for the member that members stood in this House and encouraged leg traps for wolves. It's really not appropriate. I will reach across the aisle, though, and work with the member on this advisory committee because it is time that we get this right, and it will take all of us in the Legislature to make that happen. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm so pleased to rise and support our colleague from Etobicoke–Lakeshore with her private member's bill, An Act to establish the Companion Animal Wellness Review Committee, which would see the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services work with experts. I imagine that a lot of those experts are going to be volunteers in the field, and I want to thank a lot of the people who came down today to support this. We know how hard it is for us to get here, but we're working here. People take time out of their busy lives—often they're volunteers and they are already taking time out of their busy lives to volunteer, and then they come down here. It's part of their advocacy work. That's what we want to encourage, Madam Speaker, in all our communities, not just with animals but with children, with seniors and with environmental concerns as well.

I had a couple of things I wanted to mention. One is that I have something here from Kathy Powelson, the executive director of Paws for Hope. She gives us a few items to consider when we are getting a dog or a cat for our family.

One is that we should watch out for breeders who prevent you from seeing where the animals live. I think that's a red flag and I think that part of this bill and part of this committee that we want to set up should look at how to educate the public, because we can make rules and regulations, but if the public isn't doing their part and they are not aware of what they should be watching for, too

many dogs and cats are going to slip through the cracks. So one is, see where the dogs live, where they play, how they eat, how they're cared for.

See the health of the parents of the animals.

Stay away from animals in a pet store. We all know that Toronto and other jurisdictions across this country and province are banning the sale in pet stores of dogs from breeders. Some of the pet stores only sell dogs that are rescued and looking for a second home.

She also mentions breeders who sell multiple types of breeds or designer dogs. She says a good breeder would only sell one type, maybe two, of dogs and be an expert in that type of breed.

If they have multiple litters available for adoption at the same time, if their dogs are being bred too often, we know that that's a real concern for some of these animals.

She also says that reputable breeders are going to be choosy about where their dogs or cats go. They're going to ask you a lot of questions. I know that when we got our dog, Chelsea, we had to fill out a lengthy questionnaire about where she was going to play, whether there were other animals for her to interact with, what kind of yard we had, who was going to be home during the day to take the dog out, how much exercise the dog would be getting and so on. A good breeder would take responsibility for that as well.

I just want to thank Shelley Austin for coming down from Thornhill. She has been on the board of the Toronto Humane Society since 2016, and she works with some animal rescues—Dogs Without Collars Rescue, with one of her colleagues. They rescue animals from Egypt and Thailand. She's also a volunteer driver for Freedom Drivers, Animal Rescue Transports.

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I have Shelley on Facebook, and that's how I knew to invite her today—because I see all the pictures of her and her friends helping out with animals. I think Roz Brodsky around the corner from me helps her, as well.

I have a message from Shelley because she can't speak here in the Legislature, at the microphone. She says, "Animal welfare in Ontario is woefully lacking in clear rules about charges of cruelty, and puppy mills fit into this as well. The animals in these facilities are treated inhumanely by normal standards of care." I think what we're focusing on today is creating some type of standard of care for how our pets get from their parents to our homes. "The basic requirements for animal welfare"—of course we want to ensure that animals have shelter, food and water.

I look forward to all members in the House supporting this, and lots more debate.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I'm proud to stand and support my friend and colleague—it's hard for me not to say "Christine Hogarth"—from Etobicoke–Lakeshore. We have known each other for many, many years. When Christine, the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore, suggested this as her private member's bill, I thought it was a great idea.

Why do I like it? Because we're talking about preventive measures. There are a lot of things that we do as a government and, frankly, that I do at the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services that are reactionary. What I love about Bill 65 is, it's talking about the prevention piece. There's an education component. There's an information component. There's a preventive component, and I think that is often missed when we discuss and debate policies and issues.

As you know, Speaker, I grew up on a farm. We have a thing at OMAFRA, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, that's called "normal farm practices." As the member was speaking and as we were talking about what this committee could do, I was struck by the similarities that we have, already existing at OMAFRA, with the Normal Farm Practices Protection Board. I think there are some real opportunities for synergy and maybe looking at that best-practices model to see how we can adapt it for our breeders in the province of Ontario.

We have to acknowledge that what we are trying to prevent is the very small percentage of bad actors. We have many, many excellent breeders in the province of Ontario; we saw it when people were making reference to their pets.

The one thing I will note is that all of the parliamentarians who are speaking this afternoon are women. I'm not sure if that makes this an International Women's Day debate or something else.

I think that we have an opportunity to improve the system, and improve it at the front end. As someone who is in the public safety ministry, there is nothing that would make me happier than to focus my efforts on something other than the very, very small percentage of people who refuse to play by the rules and who refuse to give our pets the respect they deserve.

In wrapping up, I will say that while we want to create a more robust system that protects our furry friends and, yes, even the scaly ones, I think that Bill 65 is an excellent opportunity for us to do some preventive stuff—an education component that will lead to a better animal protection system in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore, who has two minutes to reply.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you to everybody for your comments today. They are truly heartfelt. I appreciate the member from Beaches–East York, the member from Cambridge, the member from Waterloo, the member from Thornhill and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and I thank you for sharing your own personal stories about your animals and your pets.

As we talked about, pets are part of our family, and we can do better as a society for them. Just today alone, we have started the conversation. The goal of this bill was to start this conversation on how we can do better for our pets, a part of our families—and ideas came out today, by just having this conversation.

I hope the people watching will have learned something today about the education piece, about when you are

looking to buy a pet for your home: questions you should be asked, questions you should be asking. Reputable breeders will ask you those questions. They will interview you. They will ask you. They will want to make sure that that pet is in the right home and that it is the right fit for you and your family.

The other piece is, when buying a pet online, we should always be careful. You always want to make sure you ask those questions: Is there a background? Have they asked you those questions?

If anything, we can get that message across today, Madam Speaker, that we should ask those questions and raise red flags. If there is a cute puppy online and you're meeting someone in a parking lot, maybe that should raise some red flags. Because if we don't purchase those pets, the economy isn't there and then those people will no longer have that business. We want to make sure that we are supporting our breeders who are responsible. We want to make sure that we're supporting our humane societies.

I just want to say a thank you to all those who volunteer to help rescue animals and those who volunteer in our humane societies all across this province. You truly give your heart to this job, to your volunteer roles, and to help your furry friends have a better life. When you look in those eyes, your heart often melts. I just want to say thank you to all of the volunteers out there and thank you to everybody for your comments today.

WASTE DIVERSION

Ms. Donna Skelly: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should implement a province-wide industry stewardship plan promoting a no-cost program that encourages unwanted clothing and textiles be donated to local charitable and non-profit organizations instead of sending these items to landfills.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Ms. Skelly has moved private member's notice of motion number 34. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Donna Skelly: It is an honour to be presenting my private member's motion to the House this afternoon.

Speaker, I would like to share with you today a shocking statistic: 85% of North America's unwanted clothing ends up in our landfills. That's more than 24 billion pounds of discarded clothing each and every year. The truth is that most consumers are simply unaware of the huge environmental cost of throwing away their clothes, and the ballooning and expensive clothing industry known as fast fashion simply doesn't help.

My private member's motion tackles the issue of textile waste by encouraging consumers across Ontario to think twice before they throw out their used clothing and goods, and instead donate them to their local charities. The objective of my motion is to give used clothing a second life and local charities a helping hand. I want Ontarians to stop before they throw away more of their used clothing and to follow these three simple words: Don't dump; donate.

We tend to think that if a shirt has a stain on it or if a pair of pants is worn out, there isn't any use for them, so we naturally throw them out. However, the reality is that our clothes in fact do have an afterlife, regardless of the state they're in. There are several charities and non-profit organizations that rely on revenue from the sale of used clothing and other items to fund their operations.

What's also interesting to note is that charities will take your clothing donations even if they're not in good condition, because that material can be recycled. I learned about this last year when I met with stakeholders from Value Village. They explained to me that clothing and other items they collect get sent to sorting facilities, including one here in Toronto. Whatever can be sold is distributed to Value Village's charity stores. The rest is recycled for other purposes. This includes sending tattered clothing to factories in places like India where the fabrics are de-threaded and the fibres are used to create a product called shoddy. That product can then be repurposed as insulation or underlay for carpets.

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Value Village has many ways of collecting used clothing and goods, including purchasing these items from charities and non-profits such as Diabetes Canada. Through this, Value Village has paid over \$400 million to Ontario non-profits in the last 10 years and has helped divert more than 134 million pounds of material from Ontario's landfills each year.

Speaker, I am thrilled that my motion is being supported by various charitable organizations that I've spoken with over the past few months. One of these organizations is the Salvation Army. In 2017-18, the Salvation Army Thrift Store national recycling program helped to divert over 79 million pounds of clothing, textiles and household items from local landfills through its 108 thrift stores and nine recycling centres across Canada. This program supports over 2,000 jobs and helped the Salvation Army put over \$6 million into communities in need right across Canada.

Here's how the Salvation Army sees it. Please allow me to read a few paragraphs from their letter of support for this motion:

"As an environmental steward for over 100 years in Canada, the Salvation Army Thrift Store is a firm believer in giving gently used clothing and textiles a second chance at life. Help us create cleaner communities by donating to divert from landfills while making a difference for neighbours in need and the planet we share.

"The Salvation Army Thrift Store makes every donation count in making a difference for neighbours in need and"—again—"the planet we all share. We encourage our communities to support initiatives that keep gently used clothing and textiles out of landfills through organizations such as ours.

"Diverting textiles to the Salvation Army Thrift Store benefits the environment, extending their life by reducing the overproduction of consumer goods and slowing textiles going to landfill. It also benefits those in need locally and provides guests with the opportunity to shop for items they could otherwise simply not afford."

Speaker, another organization with a similar program that has sent a letter of support for my motion is Diabetes Canada. Over the past 30 years, Diabetes Canada has grown to become Canada's largest clothing recycler. Through their branded donation bins and curbside pickups, they help to divert over 99 million pounds of textiles from landfills each and every year in Canada.

Consider their 2017 numbers. In that year, Diabetes Canada collected approximately 17 million pounds of clothing and 14 million pounds of household items from homes just across Ontario. They raise approximately \$10 million yearly to fund research, education and advocacy projects to support Canadians living with diabetes and pre-diabetes, including four million here in Ontario.

One of the keys to the success of Diabetes Canada's program is their partnerships with local municipalities. The city of Markham is one of their success stories. Why is this important? Because in April of 2017, Markham became the first municipality in North America to ban textile waste at the curb. Markham has 155 of its own designated donation bins located at city facilities. All donated items are given to local charitable organizations such as Diabetes Canada and the Salvation Army.

As part of my research for this motion, I met with Claudia Marsales, Markham's senior manager of waste management. She shared with me that it's important to partner with local charities because people are more willing to donate if they know their local community is being helped and that the charity is indeed legitimate. The program has been very successful, with the city of Markham collecting 11 million pounds of used clothing and other items in its first year alone.

As I mentioned, Madam Speaker, the point of my motion is to nudge consumers to think twice before throwing out their used clothing. Clearly, when 85% is still going into dumps, there is more work to be done—which is why this motion is necessary. Given the impact that fast fashion is having on our environment, I believe that this awareness needs to begin with our fashion retailers. Some retail chains, such as H&M, have programs where clothing donated to their stores can be shredded back into fibres and reused to make new clothes. Since the inception of their clothing donation program, H&M has collected nearly 18,000 tonnes of textiles. This amounts to over 89 million T-shirts.

In 2018, H&M collected over 600,000 pounds of textiles in their stores here in Canada. Some of the denim that is sold at H&M is made from recycled materials. In fact, 35% of H&M's clothing is now made from recycled or sustainable fabrics, and they hope to reach 100% by the year 2030.

The fashion industry must play a key role, making sure that consumers fully understand how their purchases can have an impact on the environment. But consumers can also get involved, and this is the fun part of my motion. As part of this initiative, I am encouraging Ontarians under the age of 30 to participate in a province-wide competition to design a logo encouraging consumers to donate used clothing and other items to their local charities. The

motion encourages designers and manufacturers to then sew the logo on their clothing, retailers to display that logo in their stores, and charities to display the logo on their donation bins. Those young people under the age of 30 who wish to participate will have until May 3 to submit their designs to dontdumpdonate@pc.ola.org. We will then have a panel that will select a winning design.

My hope is that the fashion industry will recognize the power of this initiative and voluntarily embrace the winning symbol. I look forward to seeing the creative talents of our province's young people being put into action. Who knows? With the talent pool we have here, this symbol might be adopted right around the world.

I am pleased that the logo-design part of my motion has received positive feedback from stakeholders, including from Sean Shannon, president and CEO of the National Diabetes Trust, which is the social enterprise branch of Diabetes Canada. Here's what Sean wrote in support of this motion:

"Diabetes Canada supports the promotion of reuse and recycling of used clothing, and is pleased that a proposed addition of a 'donate' label on all new clothes sold in Ontario is being considered. We support the creation by the government of Ontario of a province-wide industry stewardship plan that encourages landfill diversion of used clothing and textile donation in support of registered charitable organizations and non-profits. An estimated one billion pounds of textiles go to Ontario landfill sites every year. Those unwanted textiles can be recycled to generate much-needed funds to support the more than 4.4 million Ontarians living with diabetes or pre-diabetes."

As we know, our landfills are overcapacity—this is not new—which is why, if there are not enough dumps around to keep up with the amount of waste we send to them, if there is anything we can do to reduce how much we send to our landfills, we should be promoting it now. If we are able to help the government create jobs and support our local charities all at the same time, then this motion is a win-win-win for Ontario.

I'm asking my colleagues today to join me in doing our part as Ontario leads the way in addressing this significant environmental concern. I'm looking forward to further debate of my motion this afternoon and I urge all members to remember these three simple words: Don't dump; donate. Thank you.

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The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Gurratan Singh: I rise today to speak in support of this bill because this bill addresses a variety of different issues. It addresses issues around the environment. It also tackles the textile industry. The textile industry has a lot of inequity within it, and predominantly, the people who are victim to this inequity are often women.

With tomorrow being International Women's Day, I think it's important to take a moment to recognize how important International Women's Day is.

International Women's Day is a day when we celebrate women and girls. And, more, we commit to building a

society where we work to address the systemic barriers that are currently facing women across this country and across the world—issues around pay equity, education, job opportunities, discrimination and more. We have a lot of work we have to do. We have a long way to go in building a more equitable society.

On International Women's Day, I always take time to recognize my mother, who taught me great, great resiliency; who, despite facing so many obstacles in her life, despite facing so many hurdles and so many barriers, always taught my brother and I this idea of *chardi kala*, the idea that in the face of adversity, in the face of hurdles and obstacles, we must always have a rising spirit, and that to have a rising spirit in the face of negativity is the true epitome of how to foster positivity within ourselves.

I also would like to take this opportunity to recognize my partner, Satvir Kaur, who always has taught me to think for tomorrow, and encourages me to foster empathy instead of judgment and to be a person who works and operates in this world with integrity.

I'm thankful to have these powerful, resilient and extraordinary women in my life. I'd like to wish everyone a happy International Women's Day.

Also at the heart of this bill are issues around the environment. Right now, as humanity, we stand at a crucial point. We are at a fork in the road. We can either choose to protect our environment and continue down a path that will help foster positivity in our environment, or we can end in a path that will result in our destruction. Once again, our earth stands at a crucial, crucial point. We are at a fork in the road. We can choose to either protect our environment or continue down a path that will surely end in its destruction.

It's now incumbent upon us to address this incredibly pressing issue. We have one earth; we have one world. The environmental peril that is facing our earth today is quite possibly the greatest threat to humanity.

There is a recent study that demonstrates how drastic this risk is. Currently, in the entire world, 70% of the world's wilderness is located in just five countries. Of those five countries, Canada holds the second-largest area of wilderness in this world, second only to Russia.

So, we, as Canadians, have a huge, huge responsibility, and our actions don't impact only Canadians; they impact the world. As global citizens, we have to act now to address this incredibly real threat. That means addressing climate change. Climate change is real. Human activity is increasing the temperature of this earth.

Last year, we saw forest fires run their havoc across North America. From BC to Ontario, from Ontario to California, we saw thousands of acres of forest consumed by fire.

But as the world heats, it impacts more than just forests. Recent studies have shown how heat waves are affecting the planet's oceans, and how these heat waves have increased sharply, killing swaths of life within sea life, just like how wildfires take out huge areas of forest.

We have to reframe our conversation around the environment. It's not just about future generations anymore. Gone are the days where we have this threat that the

environment could pose on our children or our children's children. The wolf is at the door. The threat to the environment is something that impacts us today. It puts us at risk today.

Accordingly, we must work immediately to reduce carbon emissions and to shift our world towards a green economy. The future of the world depends on it. That means understanding that we have to shift from fossil fuels to a more sustainable energy source. We must shift towards energy that is sustainable, that is consistent.

It's not enough to just shift to electric cars; we need to build a sustainable world. How do we build a sustainable world? It's by building a sustainable society, by choosing public transit over cars, by choosing bike lanes over car lanes, investing in green technologies, to shift to wind and solar and other forms of technology, to build the world thoughtfully. Instead of filling landfills, we should be building a source and a future that will be sustainable today and tomorrow.

I want to, once again, thank the member for putting forward this bill. I will be supporting and we will be supporting this bill, and I look forward to further conversation today.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Jill Dunlop: I want to thank my colleague the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook for bringing forward this important piece of legislation, as this motion is not only about reducing but creating jobs and helping those in need.

Approximately 80 billion new items of clothing are produced globally every year, and yet textiles are among the least commonly recycled household goods. Last year, a CBC study found that 85% of unwanted textiles in North America ended up in landfills. This enormous amount of waste could be drastically reduced through a province-wide industry stewardship plan, promoting a no-cost program that encourages unwanted clothing and textiles to be donated to local, charitable and non-profit organizations instead of landfills.

This issue is something that many people in my riding of Simcoe North feel strongly about. Beth McKean from Orillia is a perfect example. She started a business, Hip Chick Designs, which uses only recycled or end-of-roll materials to create beautiful new designs. She not only saves clothes from being thrown away but inspires other members of our community to reduce, reuse and recycle their own textiles. I'm proud to say that today I'm wearing one of her original creations: this upcycled dress.

Presently, the average person discards 37 kilograms of textiles each year. This equates to over 11,000 tonnes of textiles per year in Simcoe county alone. In order to combat this type of clothing wastage, the county of Simcoe piloted a county-wide textile collection day in 2018. Residents were mailed a bag which they could fill with clothing and other textiles in order for proper collection of the materials. This collection resulted in 107 tonnes of used clothing, linens, shoes and accessories being saved from landfills. This is compared to a total of only 50 tonnes

of textiles collected at all the county textile collection sites the year prior.

Simcoe county's textile collection pilot shows that when provided with easy, no-cost opportunities, people are willing and enthusiastic to participate in reducing waste.

In addition to these examples from my riding, countless other programs like this exist across the province. The city of Stratford ran a similar collection program with Diabetes Canada. Their program focused on items that were stained, ripped or otherwise unfit to be donated to charitable organizations—items which are often sent to landfills.

As the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook mentioned earlier, the city of Markham has also been a leader in textile recycling. Markham was the first municipality in North America to completely ban textiles from being included in waste collection.

At 108 stores across the province, the Salvation Army diverts 67 million pounds of textiles from landfills every year. In 2017, they invested \$6 million in communities in need all across Canada. Over 2,000 jobs are created and supported by their programs.

Diabetes Canada, as mentioned before, diverts about 99 million pounds of textiles, and they raise approximately \$10 million every year to fund research, education and advocacy to support four million Ontarians living with diabetes. They give the textiles they collect to organizations like Value Village, who then resell the items. Value Village says that the more donations they receive, the more jobs they can provide at their sorting centres across the province.

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Already, we can see that the people of Ontario are willing and eager to reduce their waste and recycle. It is not hard to imagine that, with a new province-wide plan to encourage textile recycling brought on by this motion, we could see even more substantial results.

Whether you're a student in fashion design class at Orillia Secondary School, hosting your own used clothing sale, a creative and business-savvy designer like Beth, or you're simply placing a bag of clothing on the curb for collection, we can all make a difference.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you to the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook for bringing this motion forward. First, I want to salute her intentions. I think it's a very noble thought. I'm really happy to support the motion as well, and we'll all be supporting it. I'm really honoured to be speaking to it. As someone who did her master's thesis on the garment industry's use of women workers, it is an honour for me to speak to it as well.

I think there is a deep sense of responsibility and care for our environment that goes behind this motion, and I'm really proud of that. I think it's forward-thinking because it looks at how we can protect our environment, how we can protect our landfills in the long run; this is a method that we can use. It's really empowering that a member from the government side is looking into that.

As I said, I salute the intention. But I do want to add a little bit to it, because for my research I looked at the people who actually are the main employees of this sector, primarily women. That's what I focused on. It is also International Women's Day that we're celebrating in the House today, and what better day to speak to this than today? It's really important for me to point out that a lot of the people who work in this sector are women who do not have the rights that they deserve in the industry. The garment industry is notorious for employing women, especially in really bad conditions, where they don't even get a break to go to the washroom.

Yesterday, we talked about where I came from. We know that in Bangladesh a few years ago, in the collapse of Rana Plaza—which is still all too real in our memories—a lot of workers died in that building because of the condition of the building. It speaks volumes of the textile industry and the garment industry in general, and how fast fashion has impacted our world in so many different ways—not just the environment but also workers' rights and people thinking about fashion itself. So it's really great that we're having this dialogue in this House.

The member before me pointed out that 85% of our clothing ends up in landfill, doesn't end up in donation boxes. It's really important to point that out, because we know that when we donate our clothing, it's a great feeling. You think, "I've used this. I can declutter. I can clean up my closet, and I'm also doing something great: Someone else can use it." It's also great for the folks who are doing the charity and the recycling, and then you also think that the third person, who will be the shopper with a budget, can now find something affordable.

But let's look at this train of this pair of pants, for example. Is it that simple? Sometimes it's not, really, because what ends up happening is that, of the amount of clothes that gets donated, usually 25% of that—only 25% of that—actually gets sold or reused, because about 50% of that actually ends up on the shelves of those stores and then 50% of that, which is 25% of the total, actually is reused.

So what happens to the rest of the clothing? The rest of the clothing, as the member already mentioned, sometimes ends up in other countries. That idea also sounds great. But as someone who comes from a developing country and has done research on it, I know what happens when a lot of these countries—countries like Kenya, for example—receive a lot of clothing. Of what ends up there, only a small percentage of that clothing gets used and the rest ends up in their landfills. I like to think of all of us as global citizens, because their landfill is also our landfill. Even though it didn't end up in my backyard, that doesn't mean that it didn't end up in someone else's backyard.

What I'm trying to get to is the point that: Are we going far enough with this? Because we might feel good by proposing this idea, that we are actually creating a stewardship where we are doing something right, but if we look at—in 2016, I believe, the East African bloc, which is the community of three countries that came together, said, "We're going to put a ban on the importing of used clothes,

because we just can't deal with it." What it's doing is, not only is it actually ending up in their landfills, but also another issue was that it's actually making their textile industries suffer, which is another huge problem. When we cause another industry like Kenya's textile industry to suffer, I don't think we're doing the right thing.

It's really important for us to know these elements of it because we have to make sure that the textile industry—especially when it comes to garments, it has now become a sort of sub-world textile industry that goes beyond Ontario or Canada. Sometimes a product is made somewhere and then packaged somewhere and then worn somewhere else.

I salute the member for bringing this motion forward, but I would like it to go—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you. Further debate?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I'm excited to stand in the House today to show my support for my colleague the member from Flamborough-Glanbrook for her private member's motion to implement a plan to promote donating clothes and textiles. I want to thank the member from Simcoe North—my fellow neighbour in Simcoe county—for her wonderful remarks.

Waste management is a vital component when it comes to protecting our environment. That is why, as part of our Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan, we have set out a path that will address this. To keep our promise of being committed to taking meaningful action to keeping our province beautiful, strong and vibrant, we need to focus on what we can do as individuals to make that happen. We need to reduce litter and waste in our communities across Ontario, and our government is helping make this easier for everyone, which is why, in our Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan, we have committed to establishing an official day focused on cleaning up litter in Ontario and raising awareness about the impacts of waste in our neighbourhoods, in our waterways and in our green spaces.

Last November, I had the opportunity to visit the Barrie Value Village with my colleague the member from Barrie-Springwater-Oro-Medonte to have a tour of the facility and learn about their process. Did you know, Madam Speaker, that in Ontario, Value Village saves over 60 million pounds of clothing and textiles from landfills each year? Many of our members have spoken about other areas where this saving occurs. The Barrie location alone takes in 9,000 new pieces a week, and 50% of that is recycled by being sent to international locations for vendors to break down and reuse. This is phenomenal, Madam Speaker.

By making it easier for Ontarians to donate or recycle their used clothing, we can continue to reduce the amount of garbage in our landfills. After all, if you make things easier for people in their everyday lives, they will do it, and that's what our government is trying to do.

I am happy to support my colleague's motion, and I look forward to working with her in the coming weeks.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate? I recognize the member for Cambridge.

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: Thank you again, Madam Speaker. My lucky day; I get to speak twice.

When this motion was brought forward by the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook, I was really excited because, as some of you know, I used to work for the Kidney Foundation of Canada. There is a Kidney Clothes program that they have there. My friend and former colleague Sylvia Krampelj, who is now the managing director of the Kidney Clothes program, was very excited to hear that this motion was being brought to the attention of the House. She said to me that in the last four years, between \$500,000 annually has been brought into the foundation, and up to just under \$1.3 million net. That's just from clothing donations. And the clothing donation isn't just shirts and blazers and whatever; it can be pillows, towels, belts, purses, shoes and socks. As the member stated, they don't need to be in the greatest condition because there is a way to reuse these products. She did mention to me as well that textiles are the second-biggest polluter next to oil and gas. That stat hasn't been mentioned yet, and I found that to be very, very surprising.

1510

This motion, as the member had mentioned, is intended to reduce the amount of waste that is sent to our landfills and to create jobs in areas related to this industry. Last January, an investigation by CBC's Marketplace found that 85% of unwanted textiles in North America ended up in landfills. Again, I can say, from working at the kidney foundation, that that is very true. People aren't aware of these clothing donation programs. Another challenge that we had at the foundation was that a lot of clothing donation boxes weren't set up by reputable charities—just random for-profit organizations. So I would encourage people to be mindful of where and how they're donating their clothing.

These charities—Diabetes Canada was mentioned as well—I can't speak to what they do with the funds that they raise from their clothing donations, but I know that at the kidney foundation, we use that money for patient supports, for programs to help the patients. It is so good to see that people are able to help others just through something as simple as clothing donation. There are over 24 billion pounds a year of waste, which is an unbelievable amount. So much of what is treated as waste could be recycled and reused. That does happen, but it's not happening nearly enough.

So whether it's the kidney foundation or Diabetes Canada or H&M, as the member mentioned, or another group, there is proof that we can all make a difference. Unfortunately, the numbers are also proof we need to do more to encourage those who can help make a difference to do so. That's why I'm standing in support of this motion today.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise and add my little piece here at the end of the debate. It's a motion by the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook, and that it's basically to get us all to do more public awareness to

begin with, but also to show the support of the Legislature of Ontario that used clothing gets donated; it doesn't go into landfill. It's a really tragic situation when we hear of all the clothes, the billions of dollars of pounds yearly that goes into landfill. The clothing should be donated as textiles so it could be recycled, and the profits, if there are any profits, should go to non-profit organizations instead of just companies that are taking advantage—taking our used clothing and selling it overseas, and that doesn't really support our communities.

We all know that our kids maybe wore hand-me-downs—maybe a lot of us, like myself, wore hand-me-downs from older siblings. There are lots of different ways that we can be creative about recycling and reusing clothing. A lot of the used textiles can be made into clothing, but it can also be used to make under-padding or other types of products. I have in my car right now—my sons cleaned out their old karate equipment—a huge, giant garbage bag full of the equipment and the clothing that they wore to do martial arts, to bring it to the program—it's all washed—which said they would give it to some kids to have some extra clothing to wear.

The fashion industry is very powerful, especially in North America. My daughter likes to say she goes shopping in my cupboard, which I enjoy very much because it gives me an excuse to buy something new; otherwise you don't feel that responsible. I think that fashion is actually one of the problems with the type of clothing that we constantly buy and we constantly feel the need to recycle. Gone are the days where people had one outfit for Sunday and the rest of the week another outfit.

So we want to educate people about some dirty little secrets in our community, about the fact that too much of our used clothing is going to landfill or for profit overseas, that we want to support Diabetes Canada and the Salvation Army and all of our communities. I know that Markham has a great recycling program and Newmarket has an amazing recycling program to support Diabetes Canada.

Thank you to all of the volunteers. Thank you to everybody who is going to donating lots and lots of clothing. Take care.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook for her response.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to thank all of the members for speaking on behalf of this motion, beginning with the member from Brampton East. I would also like to offer my congratulations to the member from Brampton East and to his family on the recent victory that his brother obviously saw this past week. I would also like to thank the members from Simcoe North, Scarborough Southwest, Barrie–Innisfil, Cambridge and Thornhill for your support.

Madam Speaker, I began my comments this afternoon by stating this very shocking statistic, and it's one that I find incredibly and simply unacceptable: 85% of clothing sold in North America ends up in landfills. That, as I said, is simply unacceptable, and it is a consequence of fast fashion.

Madam Speaker, my motion encourages consumers to stop and think before they throw out their used clothing and goods, and to instead donate them to local charities. It also invites young Ontarians to participate in a province-wide contest to design a logo that I hope will be displayed proudly on clothing, in stores and on donation bins. I'm hoping that eventually the logo that we select in this contest will become a logo that is recognized globally.

Madam Speaker, I believe my motion is a win-win-win for all Ontarians and, again, I hope to remind everyone in this chamber and across this province to stop and think before you throw something in the trash, whether it's an item of clothing or simply a used good. Remember: Don't dump; donate. Thank you.

PARIS GALT MORAINÉ
CONSERVATION ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LA CONSERVATION
DE LA MORAINÉ DE PARIS GALT

Mr. Schreiner moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 71, An Act to conserve the Paris Galt Moraine by providing for the Paris Galt Moraine Conservation Plan / Projet de loi 71, Loi visant à conserver la moraine de Paris Galt grâce au Plan de conservation de la moraine de Paris Galt.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour today to rise to put forward Bill 71, the Paris Galt Moraine Conservation Act—the first bill ever introduced by a Green MPP in the history of the Ontario Legislature.

Applause.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Thank you.

I'd like to thank the many water protectors in the room today who support this bill, including those who worked on the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.

I stand in defence of something that is so easy to take for granted: water. I truly believe that government has a sacred responsibility to protect water for present and future generations, for our children and our grandchildren.

We're all too familiar with the troubling statistics: By 2025, half of the world's population will be living in water-stressed areas and one third of the world's largest groundwater systems are in danger of drying out. The water crisis hits public consciousness when we hear of places like Cape Town literally running out of water.

In Ontario, we are lucky to have abundant freshwater resources, but we need to take care of them. If we don't make efforts to protect and conserve, the regular water restrictions we see in the summer in communities like mine in Guelph could become the new norm in this province. It's all too easy for environmental or public health issues to fade away as the next crisis or scandal enters the news cycle, but we cannot delay action in protecting water until it is too late because water is life.

We do not have food production without water. We do not have jobs or prosperity without water. We do not have healthy communities or a functioning economy without water. We need to ask ourselves what is the future of water in this province, in this country, because the current course is not sustainable.

Madam Speaker, Guelph has been an example of what water stewardship looks like. Guelph has decoupled water use from population growth, showing that conservation works. But it's still not enough to make up for development pressures, climate change and population growth.

1520

The Paris Galt moraine, which cleans and filters our water at no cost, is facing threats that are undermining its ecological integrity. Community groups, the city of Guelph itself and researchers have sounded the alarm, just like people did 20 years ago when pressure mounted to protect the Oak Ridges moraine north of Toronto. In fact, Bill 71 is modelled after the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, which was passed by a Progressive Conservative government with unanimous support from all parties in the Legislature in 2001. I hope we can achieve the same with all four parties in the Legislature today.

I'd like to quote former Premier Ernie Eves when the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan came into effect. The Premier of the day said, "Preserving the Oak Ridges moraine is part of this government's proud commitment to Smart Growth—our long-term strategy to promote vibrant communities, a strong economy and a clean, healthy environment for all the people of Ontario." I believe that applies to the Paris Galt moraine.

Partisanship can run high in this House at times, and it can be quite intense. But I think there are certain issues that we can set partisanship aside on. I think it's important to recognize when a government of another party does the right thing, but I also want to note that the legislation to protect the Oak Ridges moraine was tabled three times before the final act passed in 2001. I'm not sure how often this happens, but New Democrat, Liberal and Progressive Conservative members all took turns tabling it. We all know that it can take years for good environmental legislation to become a reality, but if the Oak Ridges moraine was any indication, collectively, this House will realize the value of protecting the Paris Galt moraine sooner or later. I'm asking my colleagues to choose sooner.

Madam Speaker, I'm proud to say that I've consulted with MPPs from each party in this House, with farmers and First Nations, with municipal leaders and water experts in drafting this bill. Regardless of how the vote goes today, I want to thank the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks for taking the time to meet with me twice while drafting this bill. I want to thank the many members who gave me feedback and advice. I see the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, who took the time to talk with me on a very busy day for both of us.

I especially want to acknowledge the members from Brantford–Brant, Haldimand–Norfolk and Kitchener–Conestoga, who met with me to give me advice and

feedback that I incorporated in the drafting of this bill. I want to thank the members from Ottawa South and Ottawa–Vanier, who provided procedural advice on how to move this bill forward. I want to thank the members from Toronto–Danforth, Kingston and the Islands and Waterloo for reaching out to me to talk about the importance of protecting water.

I want to thank the thousands of people in my constituency and across the province who have emailed their MPPs, spread the word on social media and signed a petition calling for protections for the Paris Galt moraine.

I want to talk a bit about why people support this bill and what they are saying. I want to quote community groups like Wellington Water Watchers, which wrote, “We need stronger provincial protection to ensure that growth pressures, drought and climate change do not endanger water supplies in the future.” I’d like to quote Guelph city councillor Leanne Piper, who tweeted out yesterday, “No recharge=no drinking water. No protection=no recharge. It’s that simple.” I’d like to quote Victor Doyle, who worked on the original Oak Ridges moraine legislation. He wrote me: “Protection via legislation, policy and regulation is well recognized as the most effective and important means of improving the management of our groundwater resource, which is fundamental to environmental, economic and human health.” Peter Krause, former chair of the Grand River Conservation Authority and Conservation Ontario, wrote me, “I believe that the protection of groundwater transcends all political boundaries and should be an essential practice for safeguarding our drinking water supplies.”

I want to acknowledge the many water protectors who have been inspired by the life and legacy of Ojibway elder grandmother Josephine Mandamin, who passed away recently on February 22. She started the water walk movement in Ontario in 2003, and has walked over 23,000 kilometres in this province to inspire action to protect water.

Bill 71 is an important step to protect the water our children and grandchildren will need; to protect the water for a region that is expected to grow to one million people in the next two decades; to protect the water that farmers and the \$40-billion food and farming sector need to grow the food that sustains us; to provide flood protection at a time when extreme weather events caused \$1.2 billion in insurable losses in our province last year alone.

Moraines provide a vital service: filtering our water naturally for free. Moraines help absorb excess water naturally and reduce the threats posed by flooding. Protecting our moraines, in my opinion, is the fiscally responsible approach that will save the province millions in water and stormwater infrastructure.

I want to be clear, Madam Speaker, that this bill does not prevent growth or development or jobs or business investment. It’s about creating the best conditions for responsible, sustainable development, while protecting the moraine and the ecological services it provides to us free

of charge. Good businesses know that if clean water is lost, we all suffer.

Bill 71 is good for people who live in the Grand River watershed when they turn on the tap and drink water that is filtered by the Paris Galt moraine. Bill 71 is good for local businesses and for farmers who depend on clean water to create jobs and prosperity. But most importantly, this bill is good for our children, our grandchildren and future generations whose futures depend on the decisions we make today.

Madam Speaker, World Water Day is coming up on March 22, and how great would it be if we could celebrate that day with the passing of the Paris Galt Moraine Conservation Act?

So from the bottom of my heart, I want to thank the people who are here today in the galleries and the people all across Ontario who have taken the time out of their day, away from their workday, to stand up and speak out in support of protecting water. I want to thank the members of Six Nations who were here with us yesterday, talking about the issues they face in their community and the importance of protecting water in the Grand River watershed. And finally, I want to thank my colleagues who have provided the feedback that I’ve incorporated into this legislation and, today, we can come together to put water first and support Bill 71.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Harris: Today is an historic day for Ontario politics. Today we debate the first-ever private member’s bill put forward in the Ontario Legislature by a member of the Green Party of Ontario. The member for Guelph offers something new. With Bill 71, the member for Guelph is offering something that is pragmatic, something that could potentially work with our government’s mandate. Seeing that from an opposition party is fantastic.

I want to first and foremost congratulate the member for Guelph for the fact that we are debating his first-ever bill here today. I also want to congratulate him on presenting a piece of legislation that is reasonable and one that could foster a serious discussion with members of our government.

1530

It is in the spirit of the member for Guelph’s genuine bipartisan efforts that I am pleased to speak to Bill 71 today. Bill 71 finds support on the government benches because it works within the parameters of policies previously introduced by our government.

The member for Guelph’s private member’s bill to establish the Paris Galt Moraine Conservation Act complements the previous Ontario PC government’s Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001, in its visions and objectives.

The essential aim of Bill 71 is to protect the land and water located within the Paris Galt moraine, with a particular emphasis on maintaining the quality and quantity of its water.

The conservation measures Bill 71 seeks to impose strike a chord with me, not only because they work with

our government's past policies but also because they hit close to home and speak to past experiences of my riding.

The issue of clean water is of particular importance to my constituents of Kitchener–Conestoga and the residents of Waterloo region. My constituency office is located in the beautiful town of Elmira, just north of Waterloo, in the township of Woolwich. In 1989, the town faced an ecological crisis as their ground well-water supply became contaminated from a local chemical plant. To this day, local residents receive their water through a pipeline from Waterloo.

Our government, in the footsteps of PC governments before us, clearly understands the importance of environmental conservation. We recognize that water is a vital resource, one that is essential to the health and integrity of our economy, ecosystems and communities.

PC governments have always demonstrated a strong commitment to environmental conservation. In 1983, Ontario's PC government created 155 new provincial parks on the same day. In 1999, the Ontario PC government created Ontario's Living Legacy, protecting over 2.4 million hectares of land—more than the greenbelt. Then, in 2003, we committed to and closed the first coal-fired power plant.

Of course, let us not forget about the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001. The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan was established by the Ontario government to provide land use and resource management direction for the more than 190,000 hectares of land and water within the moraine.

As a government, we understand that we must embrace policies that will ensure our province's environmental and economic vitality amidst this expansion. Our government has made it abundantly clear since day one that we take conservation efforts seriously. We aim to build a strong Ontario for the generations of tomorrow, and protecting our lakes and waterways is part of that.

These are not just words, Madam Speaker. We have demonstrated conclusively our commitment to protecting Ontario's environment. Our made-in-Ontario environment plan, introduced November 29, 2018, is evidence of this. Its measures will help to protect our air, land and water, address litter and reduce waste, and support Ontarians to continue to do their share to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help communities and families prepare for climate change.

With the path that our plan lays out, I can see alignment between the member for Guelph's bill and the vision of our government. For this reason, and the reasons I've stated above, I stand here today in support of Bill 71. Again, I would like to congratulate the member for Guelph.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Ian Arthur: It's an absolute honour and pleasure to rise today in the Legislature and congratulate the member from Guelph on bringing forward this bill, and to have an opportunity to speak in support of it. I think that it

shows excellent leadership on behalf of the leader of their party.

I appreciate the comments from the other side of the floor speaking in favour of this as well, and a recognition that much of this legislation was modelled after a bill that was passed by a previous Progressive Conservative government.

The Paris Galt moraine provides drinking water for 130,000 people in the city of Guelph and another 200,000 people in the surrounding area.

I want to commend the member on crafting a piece of legislation that is so directly linked to his constituents in such a basic way: to protect the water for your constituents and the constituents in all the ridings around. I think that's a tremendous achievement, and it needs to be recognized by this House. It is truly doing what we are here to do in representing all the constituents that we represent, not just along party lines. I'm inspired by that. I truly am. I'm inspired by that. I think it's an excellent opportunity to demonstrate how you can represent your riding across party lines and represent the riding in its entirety.

I want to also take just a brief minute here—there are quite a few of us who would like to speak in favour of this so we have a very short period of time, but I'd like to take a minute to touch on what the member from Guelph said about protecting water for future generations and the emphasis in this bill that what we are doing now is for our children and our children's children. I believe policy should always be shaped with that kind of lens. What we are doing here, how we are protecting this resource, we are doing not for those of us in this chamber, but for those who are going to come after us. And that, again, is an incredibly honourable thing to be doing. It's an incredibly dedicated thing to be doing.

I'll take the last couple of seconds that I have here and just say, once again, congratulations to the member from Guelph. It is a great achievement and I look forward to supporting the bill in this House. Thank you for bringing it forward.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate? I recognized the member from Peterborough–Kawartha.

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate that.

I'd also like to echo my colleagues' comments and to congratulate the member from Guelph on introducing his first bill. I have to say, I have introduced a bill already, but his is far larger than anything I have, and far more complicated, and I appreciate the work that you put into it.

I'm going to touch on a couple of things in the bill specifically, because I think you've made a concerted effort to think of every possible thing that this could touch on. One of the worst things that we can do as legislators is introduce something that has unintended consequences that cause problems someplace else that we weren't thinking of.

What I want to touch on is the transitional issues; specifically, 19(5), the reconstruction. In the event a building is damaged because of a windstorm or something else—

fire, whatever it may be—you're not preventing someone from rebuilding that, provided it's being rebuilt in that footprint and for the same purposes. It sounds fairly obvious, but when you take a step back and think about that, there is still a fair bit of agri-business in the Guelph area, and if that provision wasn't put in there, then you have the possibility of farmers not being able to continue farming if a windstorm came through or a tornado touched down, or some other catastrophic event like that destroys the barn, and it's a dairy farm. They wouldn't be able to operate. You'd be destroying a family's living that way. I have to commend you for thinking that far ahead on it.

As well, sections 21 and 22: You recognize that there are things that are currently in the works, that there are houses that are being built, that there are families who want to have a house in a certain area and they've started that process. Your bill doesn't prevent anyone who has already begun the process; it allows that development to continue through. You're recognizing, then, that there are unintended consequences if you didn't think of those types of things. I really do have to commend you on it.

It's a fairly obvious statement that I'm about to make next as well, but I think it needs to be said: Groundwater recharge is highest in the areas where the aquifers are permeable. It's a very obvious statement. Groundwater aquifers don't work well when there's concrete over top, and what you're trying to do is put forward something that gives that balance so that the aquifers can actually do their jobs because, as you stated at the very beginning, water is life. If we don't have water, we don't have life. Well, our aquifers can't work if the water can't get into the aquifer.

The second point, again, very obvious, but needs to be brought up: The aquifers are only good to act as a filter if they're able to filter the pollution. If it is too polluted for the aquifer to do its job, it can't do its job. Again, it sounds really obvious, but it's a point that needs to be made.

1540

As development is growing, as there's encroachment on those areas, we have to recognize that we need to be able to protect those aquifers. We need to have the ability to have drinkable, potable water. If we allow that development to go too far, it doesn't matter if it's permeable ground. It doesn't matter if we're protecting the aquifer. If we have too much pollution, the aquifer can't do its job.

You said that an aquifer is a groundwater area. It produces drinkable water for us at no charge. You're absolutely right. Protecting it so that it has the ability to do that, so that we do have safe drinking water, I think, is a fabulous idea. The concept that you've come up with in your bill is a great concept. I think it is something that we can work with. I'll agree 100% on it.

Our made-in-Ontario plan—we've been referring to it as the made-in-Ontario plan because it is made in Ontario. It is about this province. We're trying to strike that perfect balance between a healthy economy and a healthy environment. I think a lot of the initiatives that you're putting forward with the Paris Galt Moraine Conservation Act—I have to look at it to say it—help to strike that balance. We're going a little bit beyond. We're looking at

the entire province when we do it. We're putting in a lot of the same things that you're proposing in your act. We're doing it across the entire province, though.

My colleague talked a little bit about the Oak Ridges moraine. I live near the Oak Ridges moraine. One of the things that disappointed me most over the last few years was the amount of construction that ended up happening on it. Now, I know there will be an argument that says that windmills are green. Windmills do produce electricity at a very green footprint. The problem is the footprint of putting them in. I'll go back to my earlier statement about how aquifers work best when the ground is permeable. When you're putting in a cement slab, you're taking away that permeability. Aquifers work best when the water is not polluted beyond what the aquifer can do. We have seen some cases now where some of those windmills have come down—luckily not in the Oak Ridges moraine—and the hydraulic fluid in it has polluted the area and essentially destroyed that area as a groundwater aquifer.

I like a lot of what you've put in your bill because you're recognizing that. You're making sure that we're not going to make some of those same mistakes, that we're not going to be putting things in place that damage the area.

I thank you very much for introducing the bill. I thank you very much for the time that you've put in to develop it. I think it is something that we can very easily work with, and you have my full support with this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you, Mike Schreiner, for this bill. Everyone in Ontario should have access to clean water; that's what I believe—urban people, rural people, First Nations people. I believe, as Ian Arthur mentioned earlier, that we must protect our water, our farmland and our natural environment for ourselves, our kids, our grandkids and future generations because it's the right thing to do. If we ignore water protection, it will be at our peril.

I was raised in Australia. It's one of the driest continents in the world, where the margin for error when it comes to water protection is very slim. I grew up during a period when we had a 10-year drought, and I saw what happens when you have the twin threats of climate change and a water protection policy which wasn't in line with what the natural environment could handle. I witnessed farmers being forced to leave their land, 100-year-old orchard groves destroyed and cities forced on extreme water shortages, where even how many showers you could have or how frequently you could water your garden was extremely limited.

I'm very scared by this Ford government's approach to protecting Ontario's water—the constant threat to open up the greenbelt for development; the elimination of the Toxics Reduction Act, which makes public the amount of toxins that industry releases, and encourages and asks industry to have a plan to reduce their toxins, including the toxins they release into our water supply.

This government's plan, an actual act, to turf the Environmental Commissioner—who was an independent

officer whose job it was to hold this government to account when it comes to water protection. The platitudes this government gives to First Nations and their concerns about boil-water advisories: We have more freshwater in Canada than any other country on earth, yet the poorest among us still must boil their water to have water that's safe enough to drink. That is not change for the better.

This bill is change for the better: the Paris Galt Moraine Conservation Act. I support it because the groundwater drinking supply—the up to 800,000 people who live in the Grand River region and the 130,000 people in Guelph deserve to have safe drinking water now and into the future. I support it because Guelph and the surrounding area is undergoing intensive rapid growth with additional impacts of extreme weather, development pressure and urban sprawl. It makes sense to come up with a plan, as this member has done, to protect what we have in a reasonable way. I support it because it's one of the many steps that we must take to protect our drinking water, not just in Guelph and that region, but in the entirety of Ontario.

Thank you for introducing this bill. I support it. Let's pass it, and then let's implement it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to stand today and speak in support of Bill 71.

I do have to acknowledge the presence of my daughter, Kirsten Starr, who is up there in the back because she's trying to stay hidden. You could stand up; I'm not going to say "stand up." My father used to say that the next generation is always an improvement on the one that went before, and she's living proof.

What we're here to talk about are the next generations. I want to congratulate the member from Guelph for bringing this forward. You've put a lot of work into it, a lot of thought, and that's evident by what's happening with the debate here.

It's part of our history in this Legislature of protecting the natural environment. We can go back to the Niagara Escarpment, Oak Ridges moraine, the greenbelt, all sorts of work that was done on our provincial parks. We know that many of these things are legacies, but water is a necessity.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order, please.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you, Speaker.

This kind of work is something we can all agree on. I would really encourage, because I'm hearing support all the way around the House, that this be one of the private members' bills that we pass. I know sometimes it's really hard. We all know we'd like to get ours done. But when we find one that we all agree on, that we know is right and that we know is the best thing to do for the people who come after us—we talked about that a bit this morning—then we all have to find a way to do that together.

I just want to say that I'm very encouraged by what I hear today. I'm very thankful to the member from Guelph. I'm glad we're able to be here to support him. As you all

know, we're kind of a caucus of Heinz 57. But we all work together, and it's great. I'm glad we can be here for him today and that it sounds like the rest of you are, as well.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: This is an important debate. I forgot how amiable private members' business can be, because it hasn't been very amiable around here lately.

The Paris Galt Moraine Conservation Act would regulate land use in the area, ensuring ecological health of the moraine is safeguarded. Essentially, it creates a plan to protect the moraine for generations to come. Of course, New Democrats are supportive of this. Thank you to the member from Guelph for bringing this forward.

The Paris Galt moraine, of course, has the largest watershed—the Grand River watershed—which filters and purifies drinking water in Waterloo region. Almost eight out of 10 people in Waterloo region are reliant on this moraine.

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Obviously, without water there's nothing. This really speaks to the very principles and values that we have as Ontarians. It requires leadership. It requires leadership because this is a good public policy bill, and it stands in stark contrast to the schedule 10 that was part of Bill 66, which was brought forward without consulting municipalities. The member from Guelph referenced his reaching across party lines and seeking information from everybody.

But yet, the government did exactly the opposite, and they brought forward the greenbelt-busting Bill 66, which threatened the protection for groundwater resources and farmlands in the province. Thankfully, Waterloo region took a very strong stand against that schedule in Bill 66. Really, at the heart of it, it was a health and safety issue, but also recognizing the economic value of the greenbelt. And still, Bill 66 has schedule 5 in it, which will repeal the toxic waste act. What kind of government, in 2019, is thinking of lowering the threshold on protecting the environment? This government, the Ford government is considering that. Of course, we're going to fight that, as we should.

So the member from Guelph has brought forward this piece of legislation. We are going to support it. I do want to just say, though, that we would like to see it as part of a larger clean water strategy, if you will, and that would include limiting the commercialization of single-use bottles of water in the province of Ontario. I know the member, through the Wellington Water Watchers, has been very active on this file, as have I.

I look forward to actually working with the member to ensure that future water source protection actually is a reality in the province of Ontario, and we're going to start that work by supporting this private member's bill, but also fighting Bill 66, which undermines the very principles and values of Ontarians around source water protection and progressive planning strategies.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Bhutila Karpoche: Everyone needs water. Our bodies are made of water, our food is grown with water, it is fundamental to a healthy life, and as the Indigenous peoples have taught us, water is life. The Paris Galt moraine is the drinking-water source for over 200,000 people, and the ecological area filters water, maintains wetlands, promotes biodiversity. For the people of Guelph and the surrounding area, it is crucial to their survival.

We need to do all that we can to protect freshwater sources, be it groundwater, like the Paris Galt moraine, or the Great Lakes, our rivers and streams. In my riding of Parkdale–High Park, we are lucky to be located on the shore of one of Ontario's Great Lakes and next to the Humber River, but with that comes civic responsibility to ensure good environmental stewardship.

My constituents have reached out to my office on the issue of protecting our water, be it to express concerns of corporations like Nestlé profiting from our water, or with ideas for keeping our water clean, like not over-salting the roads, and ensuring that everyone in Ontario has access to clean drinking water. The people of Parkdale–High Park care about our water. Water is a public good. They know that it is to be shared, protected and for all to use, not as a source of profit, and that water is a human right.

This piece of legislation, while it specifically will protect the land and water of the Paris Galt moraine, the spirit behind the bill is to protect our freshwater sources. It is an issue that every member of this assembly should care deeply about, and I'll speak further to that. Most of us in Ontario take for granted that potable water will be there every time we turn on the tap, but it won't if we aren't careful and if we aren't deliberate in protecting freshwater sources with legislation like this. We cannot take it for granted. It is a finite resource, and our survival depends on it.

Tragically, many Indigenous communities live with water insecurity and boil-water advisories—in Canada, right here in Ontario, in 2019. Successive Liberals and Conservatives, both at the federal and provincial level, have failed to work nation-to-nation and to invest in infrastructure necessary to ensure access to clean drinking water for First Nations and Indigenous communities. The NDP have long called for governments, and now for the Ford government, to clean up Grassy Narrows. The previous Liberal government promised, but never took action. This is environmental racism, and we have a serious problem in this province of tabling anti-Indigenous budgets.

We know that climate change is a very serious issue. Experts have given us less than 12 years to lower our carbon emissions before irreversible catastrophic damage. It is vital that we not only lower carbon emissions but that we're actively protecting ecosystems like the Paris Galt moraine so that wetlands and forests can absorb the carbon, so that biodiversity can thrive.

Lastly, Speaker, we need an Ontario water strategy.

On behalf of my constituents, I'm proud to support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member for Guelph has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I want to thank the members in the House for the support you've shown for this bill today. It means a lot to me, but more importantly, it means a lot to the people who are here, the people who have fought so hard to protect our water. It's an important moment for them and for all Ontarians, but most importantly, it's an important moment for my kids, our kids, our grandchildren and future generations.

I just want to thank all the members who spoke on the bill and highlight a few of the comments that were presented.

The member from Kitchener–Conestoga talked about what happened in Elmira, which I think is a really important reminder of how important it is to make sure that we have the proper protections in place for our drinking water.

To the member from Kingston and the Islands: I bragged about the work the city of Guelph has done on water protections. That member can brag about the work that Kingston has done this week on climate action, in declaring a climate emergency. Certainly, as we think about dealing with climate change, protecting water is critical and it's essential.

I want to acknowledge the member from Peterborough–Kawartha. As you probably know, I'm a big supporter of renewable energy, but we need to make sure that renewable energy is rolled out in a way that also protects our water—and understanding how we provide for that balance in protecting our communities.

I wholeheartedly agree with the members from Waterloo, Parkdale–High Park and University–Rosedale, who talked about a broader strategy for water. I see this, really, as a first step to a broader strategy.

I want to thank the independent members who came here today to make sure that we at least had five members here—and just the work we've done together.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

PROTECTING OUR PETS ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LA PROTECTION DE NOS ANIMAUX DE COMPAGNIE

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We will deal first with ballot item number 49, standing in the name of Ms. Hogarth.

Ms. Hogarth has moved second reading of Bill 65, An Act to establish the Companion Animal Wellness Review Committee. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Which committee?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I would refer it to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Is the majority in favour of this bill being referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy? Agreed.

WASTE DIVERSION

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Ms. Skelly has moved private member's notice of motion number 34. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

PARIS GALT MORAINÉ CONSERVATION ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LA CONSERVATION DE LA MORAINÉ DE PARIS GALT

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Schreiner has moved second reading of Bill 71, An Act to conserve the Paris Galt Moraine by providing for the Paris Galt Moraine Conservation Plan. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Which committee?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I refer it to the Standing Committee on General Government.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Is the majority in favour of this bill being referred to the Standing Committee on General Government? Agreed.

VISITORS

Mr. Michael Coteau: I just want to take an opportunity to recognize four great Ontarians: Gerry Hobden, Tom Cullen, Bronwen Bruch, and John Kennedy. I think I got one name wrong. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Orders of the day. I recognize the Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

Hon. Bill Walker: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The minister has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. The motion is carried.

The House stands adjourned until 10:30 on Monday, March 18, 2019. Have a great break.

The House adjourned at 1600.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
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Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
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Karahalios, Belinda (PC)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
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Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
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MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
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Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
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Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	
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Simard, Amanda (IND)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
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John Fraser, Wayne Gates
Stephen Lecce, Gila Martow
Jane McKenna, Judith Monteith-Farrell
Lindsey Park, Randy Pettapiece
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

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Ian Arthur, Stephen Crawford
Doug Downey, Sol Mamakwa
David Piccini, Kaleed Rasheed
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Daisy Wai
Clerk / Greffier: Vacant

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Amy Fee, Vincent Ke
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Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
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Sara Singh, Monique Taylor
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Lorne Coe, Michael Coteau
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Sam Oosterhoff, Gurratan Singh
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